

# GEORGIAN POETRY

1913-1915

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

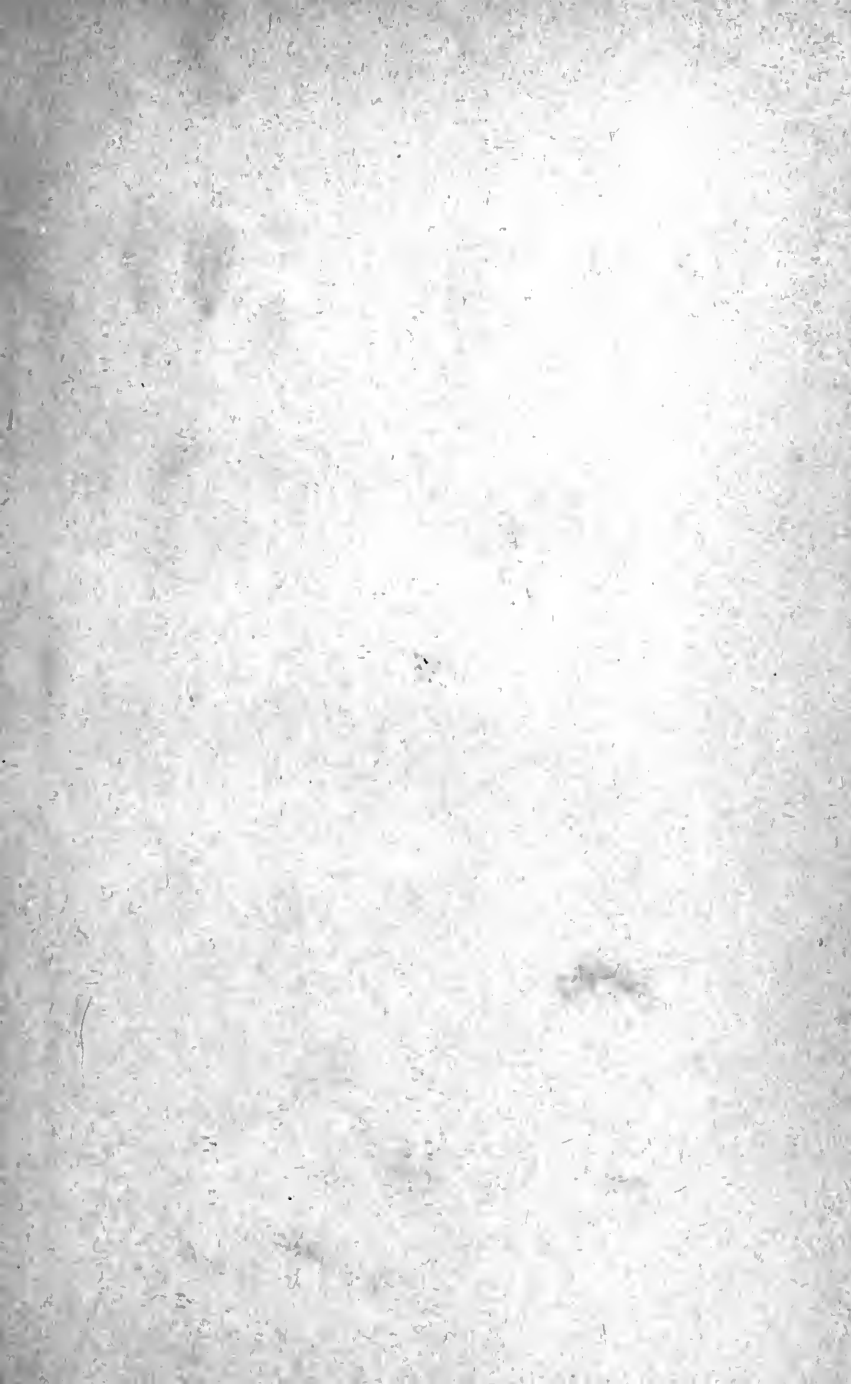


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# GEORGIAN POETRY

*Published November, 1915.*

GEORGIAN  
POETRY  
1913-1915



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IN MEMORIAM

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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE object of *Georgian Poetry* 1911-1912 was to give a convenient survey of the work published within two years by some poets of the newer generation. The book was welcomed; and perhaps, even in a time like this, those whom it interested may care to have a corresponding volume for the three years which have since passed.

Two of the poets—I think the youngest, and certainly not the least gifted—are dead. Rupert Brooke, who seemed to have everything that is worth having, died last April in the service of his country. James Elroy Flecker, to whom life and death were less generous, died in January after a long and disabling illness.

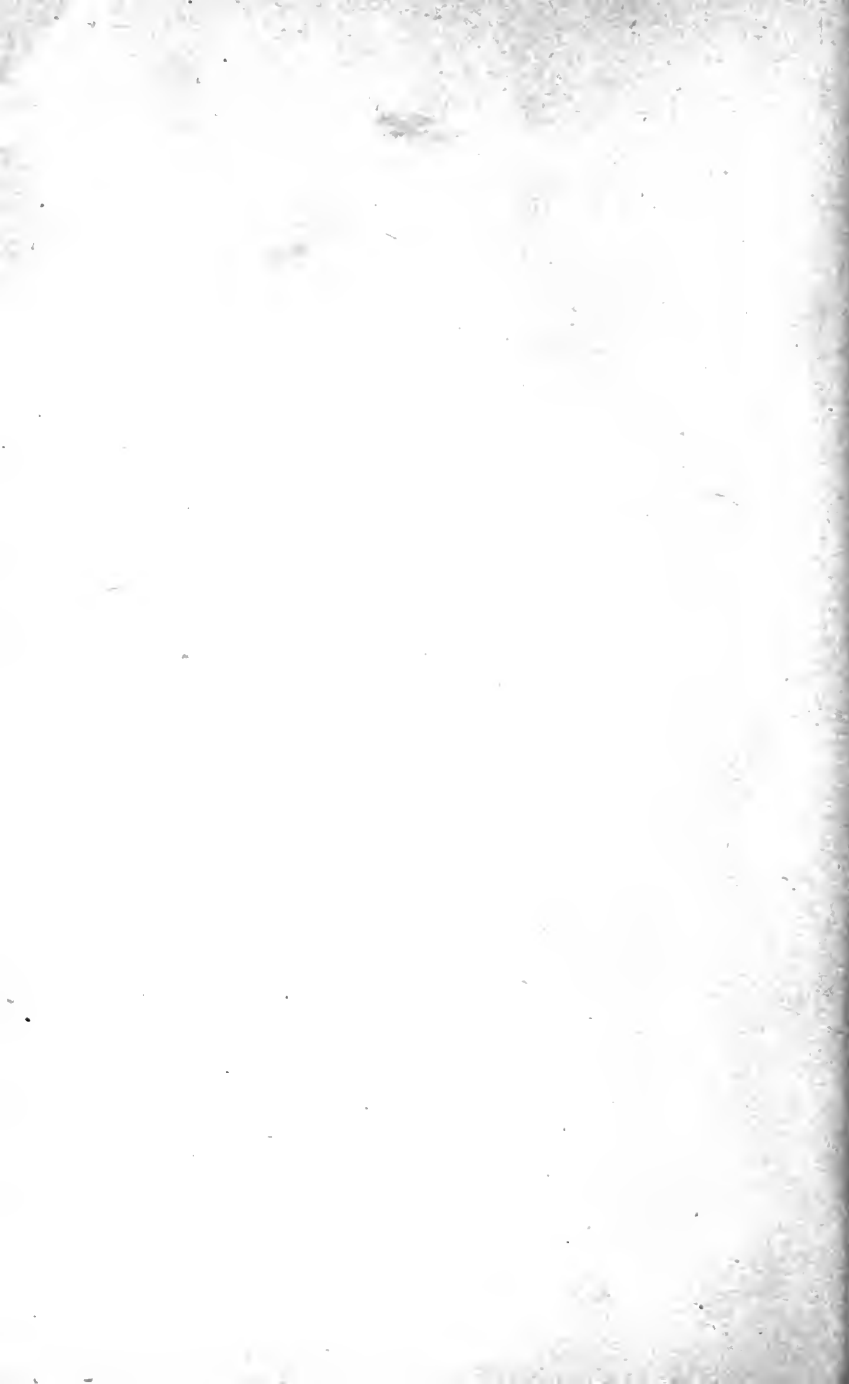
A few of the contributors to the former volume are not represented in this one, either because they have published nothing which comes within its scope, or because they belong in fact to an earlier poetic generation, and their inclusion must be allowed to have been an anachronism. Two names are added.

The alphabetical arrangement of the writers has been modified in order to recognize the honour which Mr Gordon Bottomley has done to the book by allowing his play to be first published here.

My thanks for permission to print the poems are due to Messrs Constable, Duckworth, Heinemann, Herbert Jenkins, Macmillan, Elkin Mathews, Methuen, Martin Secker, and Sidgwick and Jackson; and to the Editors of *Country Life*, the *English Review*, *Flying Fame*, *New Numbers*, the *New Statesman*, and the *Westminster Gazette*.

E. M.

Oct. 1915.



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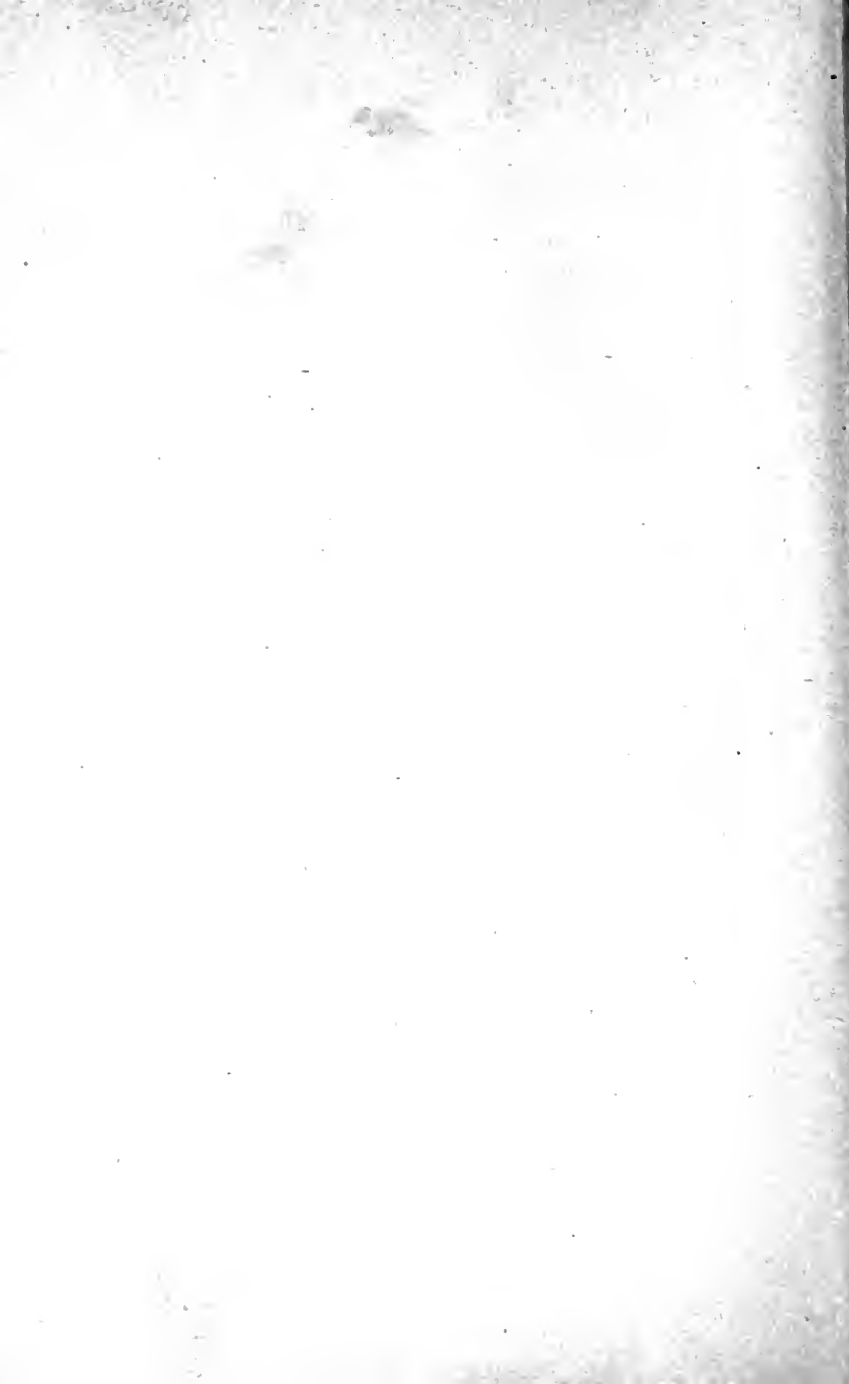
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GORDON BOTTOMLEY



KING LEAR'S WIFE\*  
(To T. S. M.)

Gordon  
Bottomley

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LEAR, King of Britain.

HYGD, his Queen.

GONERIL, daughter to King Lear.

CORDEIL, daughter to King Lear.

GORMFLAITH, waiting-woman to Queen Hygd.

MERRYN, waiting-woman to Queen Hygd.

A PHYSICIAN.

TWO ELDERLY WOMEN.

KING LEAR'S WIFE.

*The scene is a bedchamber in a one-storied house. The walls consist of a few courses of huge irregular boulders roughly squared and fitted together; a thatched roof rises steeply from the back wall. In the centre of the back wall is a doorway opening on a garden and covered by two leather curtains; the chamber is partially hung with similar hangings stitched with bright wools. There is a small window on each side of this door.*

*Toward the front a bed stands with its head against the right wall; it has thin leather curtains hung by thongs and drawn back. Farther forward a rich robe and a crown hang on a peg in the same wall. There is a second door beyond the bed, and between this and the bed's head stands a small table with a bronze lamp and a bronze cup on it. Queen HYGD, an emaciated woman, is asleep in the bed; her plenteous black hair, veined with silver, spreads over the pillow. Her waiting-woman, MERRYN, middle-aged and hard-*

---

\* Copyright by Gordon Bottomley, 1915.

Gordon  
Bottomley

*featured, sits watching her in a chair on the farther side of the bed. The light of early morning fills the room.*

*Merryn*

Many, many must die who long to live,  
Yet this one cannot die who longs to die:  
Even her sleep, come now at last, thwarts death,  
Although sleep lures us all half way to death. . . .  
I could not sit beside her every night  
If I believed that I might suffer so:  
I am sure I am not made to be diseased,  
I feel there is no malady can touch me—  
Save the red cancer, growing where it will.  
*[Taking her beads from her girdle, she kneels at the foot of the bed.]*

O sweet Saint Cleer, and sweet Saint Elid too,  
Shield me from rooting cancers and from madness:  
Shield me from sudden death, worse than two  
death-beds;  
Let me not lie like this unwanted queen,  
Yet let my time come not ere I am ready—  
Grant space enow to relish the watchers' tears  
And give my clothes away and calm my features  
And streek my limbs according to my will,  
Not the hard will of fumbling corpse-washers.  
*[She prays silently.]*

*KING LEAR, a great, golden-bearded man in the full maturity of life, enters abruptly by the door beyond the bed, followed by the PHYSICIAN.*

*Lear*

Why are you here? Are you here for ever?  
Where is the young Scotswoman? Where is she?

*Merryn*

O, Sire, move softly; the Queen sleeps at last.

Gordon

Bottomley

*Lear (continuing in an undertone)*

Where is the young Scotswoman? Where is  
Gormflaith?

It is her watch. . . . I know; I have marked your  
hours.

Did the Queen send her away? Did the Queen

Bid you stay near her in her hate of Gormflaith?

You work upon her yeasting brain to think

That she's not safe except when you crouch near her

To spy with your dropt eyes and soundless  
presence.

*Merryn*

Sire, midnight should have ended Gormflaith's  
watch,

But Gormflaith had another kind of will

And ended at a godlier hour by slumber,

A letter in her hand, the night-lamp out.

She loitered in the hall when she should sleep.

My duty has two hours ere she returns.

*Lear*

The Queen should have young women about her  
bed,

Fresh cool-breathed women to lie down at her side

And plenish her with vigour; for sick or wasted  
women

Can draw a virtue from such abounding presence,

When night makes life unwary and looses the  
strings of being,

Even by the breath, and most of all by sleep.

Herslumber was then no fault: go you and find her.

Gordon      *Physician*

Bottomley    It is not strange that a bought watcher drowns;  
What is most strange is that the Queen sleeps  
Who would not sleep for all my draughts of sleep  
In the last days. When did this change appear?

*Merryn*

We shall not know—it came while Gormflaith  
nodded

When I awoke her and she saw the Queen

She could not speak for fear:

When the rekindling lamp showed certainly

The bed-clothes stirring about our lady's neck,

She knew there was no death, she breathed, she  
said

She had not slept until her mistress slept

And lulled her; but I asked her how her mistress

Slept, and her utterance faded.

She should be blamed with rods, as I was blamed

For slumber, after a day and a night of watching,

By the Queen's child-bed, twenty years ago.

*Lear*

She does what she must do: let her alone.

I know her watch is now: get gone and send her.

[*MERRYN goes out by the door beyond the  
bed.*

Is it a portent now to sleep at night?

What change is here? What see you in the Queen?

Can you discern how this disease will end?

*Physician*

Surmise might spring and healing follow yet,

If I could find a trouble that could heal;



But these strong inward pains that keep her  
    ebbing

Gordon  
Bottomley

Have not their source in perishing flesh.  
I have seen women creep into their beds  
And sink with this blind pain because they  
    nursed  
Some bitterness or burden in the mind  
That drew the life, sucklings too long at breast.  
Do you know such a cause in this poor lady?

*Lear*

There is no cause. How should there be a cause?

*Physician*

We cannot die wholly against our wills;  
And in the texture of women I have found  
Harder determination than in men:  
The body grows impatient of enduring,  
The harried mind is from the body estranged,  
And we consent to go: by the Queen's touch,  
The way she moves—or does not move—in bed,  
The eyes so cold and keen in her white mask,  
I know she has consented.  
The snarling look of a mute wounded hawk,  
That would be let alone, is always hers—  
Yet she was sorely tender: it may be  
Some wound in her affection will not heal.  
We should be careful—the mind can so be hurt  
That nought can make it be unhurt again.  
Where, then, did her affection most persist?

*Lear*

Old bone-patcher, old digger in men's flesh,  
Doctors are ever itching to be priests,  
Meddling in conduct, natures, life's privacies.

Gordon  
Bottomley

We have been coupled now for twenty years,  
And she has never turned from me an hour—  
She knows a woman's duty and a queen's:  
Whose, then, can her affection be but mine?  
How can I hurt her—she is still my queen?  
If her strong inward pain is a real pain  
Find me some certain drug to medicine it:  
When common beings have decayed past help,  
There must be still some drug for a king to use;  
For nothing ought to be denied to kings.

*Physician*

For the mere anguish there is such a potion.  
The gum of warpy juniper shoots is seethed  
With the torn marrow of an adder's spine;  
An unflawed emerald is pashed to dust  
And mingled there; that broth must cool in  
moonlight.

I have indeed attempted this already,  
But the poor emeralds I could extort  
From wry-mouthed earls' women had no force.  
In two more dawns it will be late for potions. . . .  
There are not many emeralds in Britain,  
And there is none for vividness and strength  
Like the great stone that hangs upon your breast:  
If you will waste it for her she shall be holpen.

*Lear (with rising voice)*

Shatter my emerald? My emerald? My emerald?  
A High King of Eire gave it to his daughter  
Who mothered generations of us, the kings of  
Britain;  
It has a spiritual influence; its heart  
Burns when it sees the sun. . . . Shatter my  
emerald!

Only the fungused brain and carious mouth  
Of senile things could shape such thought. . . .  
My emerald!

Gordon  
Bottomley

*HYGD stirs uneasily in her sleep.*

*Physician*

Speak lower, low; for your good fame, speak low—  
If she should waken thus. . . .

*Lear*

There is no wise man

Believes that medicine is in a jewel.  
It is enough that you have failed with one.  
Seek you a common stone. I'll not do it.  
Let her eat heartily: she is spent with fasting.  
Let her stand up and walk: she is so still  
Her blood can never nourish her. Come away.

*Physician*

I must not leave her ere the woman comes—  
Or will some other woman. . . .

*Lear*

No, no, no, no;

The Queen is not herself; she speaks without  
sense;  
Only Merryn and Gormflaith understand.  
She is better quiet. Come. . . .

*[He urges the PHYSICIAN roughly away  
by the shoulder.]*

My emerald!

*[He follows the PHYSICIAN out by the  
door at the back. Queen HYGD awakes  
at his last noisy words as he disappears.]*

*Hygd*

I have not slept; I did but close mine eyes

Gordon           A little while—a little while forgetting. . .  
 Bottomley       Where are you, Merryn? . . . Ah, it is not  
                     Merryn. . . .  
                     Bring me the cup of whey, woman; I thirst. . . .  
                     Will you speak to me if I say your name?  
                     Will you not listen, Gormflaith? . . . Can you  
                     hear?  
                     I am very thirsty—let me drink. . . .  
                     Ah, wicked woman, why did I speak to you?  
                     I will not be your suppliant again. . . .  
                     Where are you? O, where are you? . . . Where  
                     are you?

*[She tries to raise herself to look about the room, but sinks back helplessly.]*

*The curtains of the door at the back are parted, and GONERIL appears in hunting dress,—her kirtle caught up in her girdle, a light spear over her shoulder—stands there a moment, then enters noiselessly and approaches the bed. She is a girl just turning to womanhood, proud in her poise, swift and cold, an almost gleaming presence, a virgin huntress.*

*Goneril*

Mother, were you calling?  
 Have I awakened you?  
 They said that you were sleeping.  
 Why are you left alone, mother, my dear one?

*Hygd*

Who are you? No, no, no! Stand farther off!  
 You pulse and glow; you are too vital; your  
 presence hurts. . . .  
 (Freshness of hill-swards, wind and trodden ling,

I should have known that Goneril stands here.)  
It is yet dawn, but you have been afoot  
Afar and long: where could you climb so soon?

Gordon  
Bottomley

*Goneril*

Dearest, I am an evil daughter to you:  
I never thought of you—O, never once—  
Until I heard a moor-bird cry like you.  
I am wicked, rapt in joys of breath and life,  
And I must force myself to think of you.  
I leave you to caretakers' cold gentleness;  
But O, I did not think that they dare leave you.  
What woman should be here?

*Hygd*

I have forgot. . . .  
I know not. . . . She will be about some duty.  
I do not matter: my time is done . . . nigh  
done . . .  
Bought hands can well prepare me for a grave,  
And all the generations must serve youth.  
My girls shall live untroubled while they may,  
And learn happiness once while yet blind men  
Have injured not their freedom;  
For women are not meant for happiness.  
Where have you been, my falcon?

*Goneril*

I dreamt that I was swimming, shoulder up,  
And drave the bed-clothes spreading to the floor:  
Coldness awoke me; through the waning darkness  
I heard far hounds give shivering æry tongue,  
Remote, withdrawing, suddenly faint and near;  
I leapt and saw a pack of stretching weasels  
Hunt a pale coney in a soundless rush,  
Their elfin and thin yelping pierced my heart

Gordon  
Bottomley

As with an unseen beauty long awaited;  
Wolf-skin and cloak I buckled over this night-gear,  
And took my honoured spear from my bed-side  
Where none but I may touch its purity,  
And sped as lightly down the dewy bank  
As any mothy owl that hunts quick mice.  
They went crying, crying, but I lost them  
Before I stept, with the first tips of light,  
On Raven Crag near by the Druid Stones;  
So I paused there and, stooping, pressed my hand  
Against the stony bed of the clear stream;  
Then entered I the circle and raised up  
My shining hand in cold stern adoration  
Even as the first great gleam went up the sky.

*Hygd*

Ay, you do well to worship on that height:  
Life is free to the quick up in the wind,  
And the wind bares you for a god's descent—  
For wind is a spirit immediate and aged.  
And you do well to worship harsh men-gods,  
God Wind and Those who built his Stones with  
him:

All gods are cruel, bitter, and to be bribed,  
But women-gods are mean and cunning as well.  
That fierce old virgin, Cornish Merryn, prays  
To a young woman, yes and even a virgin—  
The poorest kind of woman—and she says  
That is to be a Christian: avoid then  
Her worship most, for men hate such denials,  
And any woman scorns her unwed daughter.  
Where sped you from that height? Did Regan  
join you there?

*Goneril*

Does Regan worship anywhere at dawn?

The sweaty half-clad cook-maids render lard  
Out in the scullery, after pig-killing,  
And Regan sidles among their greasy skirts,  
Smeary and hot as they, for craps to suck.  
I lost my thoughts before the giant Stones . . .  
And when anew the earth assembled round me  
I swung out on the heath and woke a hare  
And speared it at a cast and shouldered it,  
Startled another drinking at a tarn  
And speared it ere it leapt; so steady and clear  
Had the god in his fastness made my mind.  
Then, as I took those dead things in my hands,  
I felt shame light my face from deep within,  
And loathing and contempt shake in my bowels,  
That such unclean coarse blows from me had issued  
To crush delicate things to bloody mash  
And blemish their fur when I would only kill.  
My gladness left me; I careered no more  
Upon the morning; I went down from there  
With empty hands:  
But under the first trees and without thought  
I stole on conies at play and stooped at one;  
I hunted it, I caught it up to me  
As Loutsprang it, and with this thin knife  
Pierced it from eye to eye; and it was dead,  
Untorn, unsullied, and with flawless fur.  
Then my untroubled mind came back to me.

*Hygd*

Leap down the glades with a fawn's ignorance;  
Live you your fill of a harsh purity;  
Be wild and calm and lonely while you may.  
These are your nature's joys, and it is human  
Only to recognise our natures' joys  
When we are losing them for ever.

Gordon                      *Goneril*                      But why  
Bottomley      Do you say this to me with a sore heart?  
                    You are a queen, and speak from the top of life,  
                    And when you choose to wish for others' joys  
                    Those others must have woe.

*Hygd*  
The hour comes for you to turn to a man  
And give yourself with the high heart of youth  
More lavishly than a queen gives anything.  
But when a woman gives herself  
She must give herself for ever and have faith;  
For woman is a thing of a season of years,  
She is an early fruit that will not keep,  
She can be drained and as a husk survive  
To hope for reverence for what has been;  
While man renews himself into old age,  
And gives himself according to his need,  
And women more unborn than his next child  
May take him yet with youth  
And lose him with their potency.

*Goneril*  
But women need not wed these men.

*Hygd*  
We are good human currency, like gold,  
For men to pass among them when they choose.  
                    [*A child's hands beat on the outside of the*  
                    *door beyond the bed.*]

*Cordeil's Voice (a child's voice, outside)*  
Father. . . . Father. . . . Father. . . . Are  
                    you here?  
Merryn, ugly Merryn, let me in. . . .



I know my father is here. . . . I want him. . . .      Gordon  
Now. . . .      Bottomley  
Mother, chide Merry, she is old and slow. . . .

*Hygd (softly)*

My little curse. Send her away—away. . . .

*Cordeil's Voice*

Father. . . . O, father, father. . . . I want my  
father.

*Goneril (opening the door a little way)*

Hush; hush—you hurt your mother with your  
voice.

You cannot come in, Cordeil; you must go away:  
Your father is not here. . . .

*Cordeil's Voice*

He must be here:

He is not in his chamber or the hall,  
He is not in the stable or with Gormflaith:  
He promised I should ride with him at dawn  
And sit before his saddle and hold his hawk,  
And ride with him and ride to the heron-marsh;  
He said that he would give me the first heron,  
And hang the longest feathers in my hair.

*Goneril*

Then you must haste to find him;  
He may be riding now. . . .

*Cordeil's Voice*

But Gerda said she saw him enter here.

*Goneril*

Indeed, he is not here. . . .

Gordon  
Bottomley

*Cordeil's Voice*

Let me look. . . .

*Goneril*

You are too noisy. Must I make you go?

*Cordeil's Voice*

Mother, Goneril is unkind to me.

*Hygd (raising herself in bed excitedly, and speaking so vehemently that her utterance strangles itself)*

Go, go, thou evil child, thou ill-comer.

*[GONERIL, with a sudden strong movement, shuts the resisting door and holds it rigidly. The little hands beat on it madly for a moment, then the child's voice is heard in a retreating wail.]*

*Goneril*

Though she is wilful, obeying only the King,  
She is a very little child, mother,  
To be so bitterly thought of.

*Hygd*

Because a woman gives herself for ever  
Cordeil the useless had to be conceived  
(Like an after-thought that deceives nobody)  
To keep her father from another woman.  
And I lie here.

*Goneril (after a silence)*

Hard and unjust my father has been to me;  
Yet that has knitted up within my mind  
A love of coldness and a love of him  
Who makes me firm, wary, swift and secret,  
Until I feel if I become a mother

I shall at need be cruel to my children,  
And ever cold, to string their natures harder  
And make them able to endure men's deeds;  
But now I wonder if injustice  
Keeps house with baseness, taught by kinship—  
I never thought a king could be untrue,  
I never thought my father was unclean. . . .  
O mother, mother, what is it? Is this dying?

Gordon  
Bottomley

*Hygd*

I think I am only faint. . . .  
Give me the cup of whey. . . .

[*GONERIL takes the cup and, supporting  
HYGD, lets her drink.*]

*Goneril*

There is too little here. When was it made

*Hygd*

Yester-eve. . . . Yester-morn. . . .

*Goneril*

Unhappy mother,  
You have no daughter to take thought for you—  
No servant's love to shame a daughter with,  
Though I am shamed—you must have other food,  
Straightway I bring you meat. . . .

*Hygd*

It is no use. . . .  
Plenish the cup for me. . . . Not now, not now,  
But in a while; for I am heavy now. . . .  
Old Wynec's potions loiter in my veins,  
And tides of heaviness pour over me  
Each time I wake and think. I could sleep now.

Gordon      Goneril

Bottomley      Then I shall lull you, as you once lulled me.

*[Seating herself on the bed, she sings.]*

The owlets in roof-holes  
Can sing for themselves;  
The smallest brown squirrel  
Both scampers and delves;  
But a baby does nothing—  
She never knows how—  
She must hark to her mother  
Who sings to her now.  
Sleep then, ladykin, peeping so;  
Hide your handies and ley lei lo.

*[She bends over HYGD and kisses her; they laugh softly together. LEAR parts the curtains of the door at the back, stands there a moment, then goes away noiselessly.]*

The lish baby otter  
Is sleeky and streaming,  
With catching bright fishes  
Ere babies learn dreaming;  
But no wet little otter  
Is ever so warm  
As the fleecy-wrapt baby  
"Twixt me and my arm.  
Sleep big mousie. . . .

*Hygd (suddenly irritable)*

Be quiet. . . . I cannot bear it.

*[She turns her head away from GONERIL and closes her eyes.]*

*As GONERIL watches her in silence GORMFLAITH enters by the door beyond the bed. She is young and tall and*

*fresh-coloured; her red hair coils and crisps  
close to her little head, showing its shape.  
Her movements are soft and unburied;  
her manner is quiet and ingratiating and a  
little too agreeable; she speaks a little too  
gently.*

Gordon  
Bottomley

*Goneril (meeting her near the door and speaking in a  
low voice)*

Why did you leave the Queen? Where have you  
been?

Why have you so neglected this grave duty?

*Gormflaith*

This is the instant of my duty, Princess:  
From midnight until now was Merry'n's watch.  
I thought to find her here : is she not here?

*[HYGD turns to look at the speakers; then,  
turning back, closes her eyes again and  
lies as if asleep.]*

*Goneril*

I found the Queen alone. I heard her cry your name.

*Gormflaith*

Your anger is not too great, Madam; I grieve  
That one so old as Merry'n should act thus—  
So old and trusted and favoured, and so callous.

*Goneril*

The Queen has had no food since yester-night.

*Gormflaith*

Madam, that is too monstrous to conceive:  
I will seek food. I will prepare it now.


Gordon      *Goneril*

Bottomley      Stay here: and know, if the Queen is left again,  
You shall be beaten with two rods at once.

*[She picks up the cup and goes out by the door beyond the bed.]*

*GORMFLAITH turns the chair a little away from the bed so that she can watch the far door, and, seating herself, draws a letter from her bosom.*

*Gormflaith (to herself, reading)*

“Open your window when the moon is dead,  
And I will come again.  
The men say everywhere that you are faithless,  
The women say your face is a false face  
And your eyes shifty eyes. Ah, but I love you,  
 Gormflaith.

Do not forget your window-latch to-night,  
For when the moon is dead the house is still.”

*[LEAR again parts the door-curtains at the back, and, seeing GORMFLAITH, enters. At the first slight rustle of the curtains GORMFLAITH stealthily slips the letter back into her bosom before turning gradually, a finger to her lips, to see who approaches her.]*

*Lear (leaning over the side of her chair)*

Lady, what do you read?

*Gormflaith*

I read a letter, Sire.

*Lear*

A letter—a letter—what read you in a letter?

*Gormflaith (taking another letter from her girdle)*  
Your words to me—my lonely joy your words. . . .  
“ If you are steady and true as your gaze ”—

Gordon  
Bottomley

*Lear (tearing the letter from her, crumpling it, and  
flinging it to the back of the room)*

Pest!

You should not carry a king's letters about,  
Nor hoard a king's letters.

*Gormflaith*

No, Sire.

*Lear*

Must the King also stand in the presence now?

*Gormflaith (rising)*

Pardon my troubled mind; you have taken my  
letter from me.

[*LEAR seats himself and takes GORM-  
FLAITH'S hand.*

*Gormflaith*

Wait, wait—I might be seen. The Queen may  
waken yet.

[*Stepping lightly to the bed, she noiselessly  
slips the curtain on that side as far forward  
as it will come. Then she returns to LEAR,  
who draws her to him and seats her on his  
knee.*

*Lear*

You have been long in coming:  
Was Merryn long in finding you?

*Gormflaith (playing with Lear's emerald)*

Did Merryn. . . .

Has Merryn been. . . . She loitered long before  
she came,

Gordon  
Bottomley

For I was at the women's bathing-place ere  
dawn. . . .  
No jewel in all the land excites me and enthralls  
Like this strong source of light that lives upon  
your breast.

*Lear (taking the jewel chain from his neck and  
slipping it over Gormflaith's head while she  
still holds the emerald)*

Wear it within your breast to fill the gentle place  
That cherished the poor letter lately torn from  
you.

*Gormflaith*

Did Merryn at your bidding, then, forsake her  
Queen?

[*LEAR nods.*

You must not, ah, you must not do these master-  
ful things,

Even to grasp a precious meeting for us two;  
For the reproach and chiding are so hard to me,  
And even you can never fight the silent women  
In hidden league against me, all this house of  
women.

Merryn has left her Queen in unwatched lone-  
liness,

And yet your daughter Princess Goneril has said  
(With lips that scarce held back the spittle for my  
face)

That if the Queen is left again I shall be whipt.

*Lear*

Children speak of the punishments they know.  
Her back is now not half so white as yours,  
And you shall write your will upon it yet.



*Gormflaith*

Gordon  
Bottomley

Ah, no, my King, my faithful. . Ah, no. . no . .  
The Princess Goneril is right; she judges me:  
A sinful woman cannot steadily gaze reply  
To the cool, baffling looks of virgin untried force.  
She stands beside that crumbling mother in her  
hate,  
And, though we know so well—she and I, O we  
know—  
That she could love no mother nor partake in  
anguish,  
Yet she is flouted when the King forsakes her dam,  
She must protect her very flesh, her tenderer  
flesh,  
Although she cannot wince; she's wild in her cold  
brain,  
And soon I must be made to pay a cruel price  
For this one gloomy joy in my uncherished life.  
Envy and greed are watching me aloof  
(Yes, now none of the women will walk with me),  
Longing to see me ruined, but she'll do it. . . .  
It is a lonely thing to love a king. . . .

*[She puts her cheek gradually closer and  
close to LEAR'S cheek as she speaks:  
at length he kisses her suddenly and  
vehemently, as if he would grasp her lips  
with his: she receives it passively, her  
head thrown back, her eyes closed.]*

*Lear*

Goldilocks, when the crown is couching in your  
hair  
And those two mingled golds brighten each  
other's wonder,  
You shall produce a son from flesh unused—

Gordon  
Bottomley

Virgin I chose you for that, first crops are  
strongest—

A tawny fox with your high-stepping action,  
With your untiring power and glittering eyes,  
To hold my lands together when I am done,  
To keep my lands from crumbling into mouthfuls  
For the short jaws of my three mewling vixens.  
Hatch for me such a youngster from my seed,  
And I and he shall rein my hot-breathed wenches  
To let you grind the edges off their teeth.

*Gormflaith (shaking her head sadly)*

Life holds no more than this for me; this is my  
hour.

When she is dead I know you'll buy another  
Queen—

Giving a county for her, gaining a duchy with  
her—

And put me to wet nursing, leashing me with the  
thralls.

It will not be unbearable—I've had your love.

Master and friend, grant then this hour to me:

Never again, maybe, can we two sit

At love together, unwatched, unknown of all,

In the Queen's chamber, near the Queen's crown

And with no conscious Queen to hold it from us:

Now let me wear the Queen's true crown on me

And snatch a breathless knowledge of the feeling

Of what it would have been to sit by you

Always and closely, equal and exalted,

To be my light when life is dark again.

*Lear*

Girl, by the black stone god, I did not think

You had the nature of a chambermaid,

Who pries and fumbles in her lady's clothes  
With her red hands, or on her soily neck  
Stealthily hangs her lady's jewels or pearls.  
You shall be tiring-maid to the next queen  
And try her crown on every day o' your life  
In secrecy, if that is your desire:  
If you would be a queen, cleanse yourself quickly  
Of menial fingering and servile thought.

Gordon  
Bottomley

*Gormflaith*

You need not crown me. Let me put it on  
As briefly as a gleam of Winter sun.  
I will not even warm it with my hair.

*Lear*

You cannot have the nature of a queen  
If you believe that there are things above you :  
Crowns make no queens, queens are the cause of  
crowns.

*Gormflaith (slipping from his knee)*

Then I will take one. Look.

*[She tip-toes lightly round the front of the  
bed to where the crown hangs on the wall.]*

*Lear*

Come here, mad thing—come back!  
Your shadow will wake the Queen.

*Gormflaith*

Hush, hush! That angry voice  
Will surely wake the Queen.

*[She lifts the crown from the peg, and returns  
with it.]*

Gordon      *Lear*  
Bottomley    Go back; bear back the crown:  
                 Hang up the crown again.  
                 We are not helpless serfs  
                 To think things are forbidden  
                 And steal them for our joy.

*Gormflaith*  
Hush, hush! It is too late;  
I dare not go again.

*Lear*  
Put down the crown: your hands are base hands yet.  
Give it to me: it issues from my hands.

*Gormflaith (seating herself on his knee again, and crowning herself)*  
Let anger keep your eyes steady and bright  
To be my guiding mirror: do not move.  
You have received two queens within your eyes.

*[She laughs clearly, like a bird's sudden song. HYGD awakes and, after an instant's bewilderment, turns her head toward the sound; finding the bed-curtain dropt, she moves it aside a little with her fingers; she watches LEAR and GORMFLAITH for a short time, then the curtain slips from her weak grasp and she lies motionless.]*

*Lear (continuing meanwhile)*  
Doff it. . . . (*GORMFLAITH kisses him.*)  
Enough . . . . (*Kiss*) Unless you do. . . .  
                 (*Kiss*) my will. . . . (*Kiss*)  
I shall. . . . (*Kiss*) I shall. . . . (*Kiss*) I'll have you  
                 . . . . (*Kiss*) sent. . . . (*Kiss*) to. . . . (*Kiss*.)

Gormflaith     Hush.

Gordon  
Bottomley

Lear

Come to the garden : you shall hear me there.

Gormflaith

I dare not leave the Queen. . . . Yes, yes, I  
come.

Lear

No, you are better here : the guard would see you.

Gormflaith

Not when we reach the pathway near the apple-  
yard.

*[They rise.]*

Lear

Girl, you are changed : you yield more beauty so.

*[They go out hand in hand by the doorway  
at the back. As they pass the crumpled  
letter GORMFLAITH drops her hand-  
kerchief on it, then picks up handkerchief  
and letter together and thrusts them into  
her bosom as she passes out.]*

Hygd (*fingering back the bed-curtain again*)

How have they vanished? What are they doing  
now?

Gormflaith (*singing outside*)

If you have a mind to kiss me

You shall kiss me in the dark :

Yet rehearse, or you might miss me—

Make my mouth your noontide mark.

Gordon  
Bottomley

See, I prim and pout it so;  
Now take aim and. . . No, no, no.  
Shut your eyes, or you'll not learn  
Where the darkness soon shall hide me:  
If you will not, then, in turn,  
I'll shut mine. Come, have you spied me?  
[ *GORMFLAITH'S voice grows fainter as  
the song closes.*

*Hygd*

Does he remember love-ways used with me?  
Shall I never know? Is it too near?  
I'll watch him at his wooing once again,  
Though I peer up at him across my grave-sill.  
[*She gets out of bed and takes several steps  
toward the garden doorway; she totters  
and sways, then, turning, stumbles back  
to the bed for support.*

Limbs, will you die? It is not yet the time.  
I know more discipline: I'll make you go.  
[*She fumbles along the bed to the head, then,  
clinging against the wall, drags herself  
toward the back of the room.*

It is too far. I cannot see the wall.  
I will go ten more steps: only ten more.  
One. Two. Three. Four. Five.  
Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.  
Sundown is soon to-day: it is cold and dark.  
Now ten steps more, and much will have been  
done.  
One. Two. Three. Four. Ten.  
Eleven. Twelve. Sixteen. Nineteen. Twenty.  
Twenty-one. Twenty-three. Twenty-eight.  
Thirty. Thirty-one.

At last the turn. Thirty-six. Thirty-nine. Forty.  
Now only once again. Two. Three.  
What do the voices say? I hear too many.  
The door: but here there is no garden. . . . Ah!

Gordon  
Bottomley

*[She holds herself up an instant by the door-curtains; then she reels and falls, her body in the room, her head and shoulders beyond the curtains.]*

GONERIL enters by the door beyond the bed, carrying the filled cup carefully in both hands.

Goneril

Where are you? What have you done? Speak to me.

*[Turning and seeing HYGD, she lets the cup fall and leaps to the open door by the bed.]*

Merryn, hither, hither. . . . Mother, O mother!

*[She goes to HYGD. MERRYN enters.]*

Merryn

Princess, what has she done? Who has left her?  
She must have been alone.

Goneril

Where is Gormflaith?

Merryn

Mercy o' mercies, everybody asks me  
For Gormflaith, then for Gormflaith, then for  
Gormflaith,  
And I ask everybody else for her;  
But she is nowhere, and the King will foam.  
Send me no more; I am old with running about  
After a bodiless name.

Gordon  
Bottomley

*Merryn*

*Goneril*

[Together they raise HYGD, and carry her to bed.

She breathes, but something flutters under her  
flesh:

Wynoc the leech must help us now. Go, run,  
Seek him, and come back quickly, and do not dare  
To come without him.

*Merryn*

There's fever at the cowherd's in the marsh,  
And Wynoc broods above it twice a day,  
And I have lately seen him hobble thither.

*Goneril*

*Hygd (recovering consciousness)*

Are you a dream? I thought I was alone.  
Have you been hunting on the Windy Height?  
Your hands are not thus gentle after hunting.  
Or have I heard you singing through my sleep?  
Stay with me now: I have had piercing thoughts



Of what the ways of life will do to you  
To mould and maim you, and I have a power  
To bring these to expression that I knew not.  
Why do you wear my crown? Why do you wear  
My crown I say? Why do you wear my crown?  
I am falling, falling! Lift me: hold me up.

Gordon  
Bottomley

[*GONERIL climbs on the bed and supports  
HYGD against her shoulder.*

It is the bed that breaks, for still I sink.  
Grip harder: I am slipping!

Goneril

Woman, help!

[*MERRYNN hurries round to the front of the  
bed and supports HYGD on her other  
side. HYGD points at the far corner of  
the room.*

Hygd

Why is the King's mother standing there?  
She should not wear her crown before me now.  
Send her away, she had a savage mind.  
Will you not hang a shawl across the corner  
So that she cannot stare at me again?

[*With a rending sob she buries her face in  
GONERIL'S bosom.*

Ah, she is coming! Do not let her touch me!  
Brave splendid daughter, how easily you save me:  
But soon will Gormflaith come, she stays for ever.  
O, will she bring my crown to me once more?  
Yes, Gormflaith, yes. . . . Daughter, pay Gorm-  
flaith well.

Goneril

Gormflaith has left you lonely:  
'Tis Gormflaith who shall pay.

Gordon     *Hygd*  
Bottomley     No, Gormflaith; Gormflaith. . . . Not my loneliness. . . .  
Everything. . . . Pay Gormflaith. . . .  
                  *[Her head falls back over GONERIL'S  
                  shoulder and she dies.]*

*Goneril (laying Hygd down in bed again)*  
Send horsemen to the marshes for the leech,  
And let them bind him on a horse's back  
And bring him swifter than an old man rides.

*Merryn*  
This is no leech's work: she's a dead woman.  
I'd best be finding if the wisdom-women  
Have come from Brita's child-bed to their  
          drinking  
By the cook's fire, for soon she'll be past handling.

*Goneril*  
This is not death: death could not be like this.  
She is quite warm—though nothing moves in her.  
I did not know death could come all at once:  
If life is so ill-seated no one is safe.  
Cannot we leave her like herself awhile?  
Wait awhile, Merryn. . . . No, no, no; not yet!

*Merryn*  
Child, she is gone and will not come again  
However we cover our faces and pretend  
She will be there if we uncover them.  
I must be hasty, or she'll be as stiff  
As a straw mattress is.

*[She hurries out by the door near the bed.]*

*Goneril (throwing the whole length of her body along  
Hygd's body, and embracing it)*

Gordon  
Bottomley

Come back, come back; the things I have not done  
Beat in upon my brain from every side:  
I know not where to put myself to bear them:  
If I could have you now I could act well.  
My inward life, deeds that you have not known,  
I burn to tell you in a sudden dread  
That now your ghost discovers them in me.  
Hearken, mother; between us there's a bond  
Of flesh and essence closer than love can cause:  
It cannot be unknit so soon as this,  
And you must know my touch,  
And you shall yield a sign.  
Feel, feel this urging throb: I call to you. . . .

*[GORMFLAITH, still crowned, enters by  
the garden doorway.]*

*Gormflaith*

Come back! Help me and shield me!

*[She disappears through the curtains.]*

*GONERIL has sprung to her feet at the  
first sound of GORMFLAITH'S voice.*

*LEAR enters through the garden doorway,  
leading GORMFLAITH by the hand.*

*Lear*

What is to do?

*Goneril (advancing to meet them with a deep obei-  
sance)*

O, Sir, the Queen is dead: long live the Queen.  
You have been ready with the coronation.

*Lear*

What do you mean? Young madam, will you mock?

Gordon      *Goneril*

Bottomley      But is not she your choice?  
The old Queen thought so, for I found her here,  
Lipping the prints of her supplanter's feet,  
Prostrate in homage, on her face, silent.  
I tremble within to have seen her fallen down.  
I must be pardoned if I scorn your ways:  
You cannot know this feeling that I know,  
You are not of her kin or house; but I  
Share blood with her, and, though she grew too  
worn  
To be your Queen, she was my mother, Sir.

*Gormflaith*

The Queen has seen me.

*Lear*

She is safe in bed.

*Goneril*

Do not speak low: your voice sounds guilty so;  
And there is no more need—she will not wake.

*Lear*

She cannot sleep for ever. When she wakes  
I will announce my purpose in the need  
Of Britain for a prince to follow me,  
And tell her that she is to be deposed. . . .  
What have you done? She is not breathing now.  
She breathed here lately. Is she truly dead?

*Goneril*

Your graceful consort steals from us too soon :  
Will you not tell her that she should remain—  
If she can trust the faith you keep with a queen?  
[*She steps to GORMFLAITH, who is*

*sidling toward the garden door-way, and,  
taking her hand, leads her to the foot of  
the bed.*

Gordon  
Bottomley

Lady, why will you go? The King intends  
That you shall soon be royal, and thereby  
Admitted to our breed: then stay with us  
In this domestic privacy to mourn  
The grief here fallen on our family.  
Kneel now; I yield the eldest daughter's place.  
Why do you fumble in your bosom so?  
Put your cold hands together; close your eyes,  
In inward isolation to assemble  
Your memories of the dead, your prayers for her.

*[She turns to LEAR, who has approached  
the bed and drawn back the curtain.]*

What utterance of doom would the king use  
Upon a watchman in the castle garth  
Who left his gate and let an enemy in?  
The watcher by the Queen thus left her station:  
The sick bruised Queen is dead of that neglect.  
And what should be the doom on a seducer  
Who drew that sentinel from his fixt watch?

*Lear*

She had long been dying, and she would have died  
Had all her dutiful daughters tended her bed.

*Goneril*

Yes, she had long been dying in her heart.  
She lived to see you give her crown away;  
She died to see you fondle a menial:  
These blows you dealt now, but what elder  
wounds  
Received them to such purpose suddenly?

Gordon           What had you caused her to remember most?  
Bottomley       What things would she be like to babble over  
                  In the wild helpless hour when fitful life  
                  No more can choose what thoughts it shall en-  
                                courage  
                  In the tost mind? She has suffered you twice over,  
                  Your animal thoughts and hungry powers, this  
                                day,  
                  Until I knew you unkingly and untrue.

*Lear*  
Punishment once taught you daughterly silence;  
It shall be tried again. . . . What has she said?

*Goneril*  
You cannot touch me now I know your nature:  
Your force upon my mind was only terrible  
When I believed you a cruel flawless man.  
Ruler of lands and dreaded judge of men,  
Now you have done a murder with your mind  
Can you see any murderer put to death?  
Can you—

*Lear*                   What has she said?

*Goneril*  
Continue in your joy of punishing evil,  
Your passion of just revenge upon wrong-doers,  
Unkingly and untrue?

*Lear*                               Enough: what do you know?

*Goneril*  
That which could add a further agony  
To the last agony, the daily poison

Of her late, withering life; but never word  
Of fairer hours or any lost delight.  
Have you no memory, either, of her youth,  
While she was still to use, spoil, forsake,  
That maims your new contentment with a longing  
For what is gone and will not come again?

Gordon  
Bottomley

*Lear*

I did not know that she could die to-day.  
She had a bloodless beauty that cheated me:  
She was not born for wedlock. She shut me out.  
She is no colder now. . . . I'll hear no more.  
You shall be answered afterward for this.  
Put something over her: get her buried:  
I will not look on her again.

*[He breaks from GONERIL and flings  
abruptly out by the door near the bed.]*

*Gormflaith*

My king, you leave me!

*Goneril*

Soon we follow him:

But, ah, poor fragile beauty, you cannot rise  
While this grave burden weights your drooping  
head.

*[Laying her hand caressingly on GORM-  
FLAITH'S neck, she gradually forces  
her head farther and farther down.]*

You were not nurtured to sustain a crown,  
Your unappointed parents could not breed  
The spirit that ten hundred years must ripen.  
Lo, how you sink and fail.

*Gormflaith*

You had best take care,

For where my neck has bruises yours shall have  
wounds.

Gordon           The King knows of your wolfish snapping at me:  
Bottomley       He will protect me.

*Goneril*                   Ay, if he is in time.

*Gormflaith (taking off the crown and holding it up  
blindly toward Goneril with one hand)*

Take it and let me go!

*Goneril*                   Nay, not to me:

You are the Queen's, to serve her even in death.

Yield her her own. Approach her: do not fear;

She will not chide you or forgive you now.

Go on your knees; the crown still holds you  
down.

*[GORMFLAITH stumbles forward on her  
knees and lays the crown on the bed, then  
crouches motionlessly against the bedside.]*

*Goneril (taking the crown and putting it on the dead  
Queen's head)*

Mother and Queen, to you this holiest circlet

Returns, by you renews its purpose and pride;

Though it is sullied with a menial warmth,

Your august coldness shall rehallow it,

And when the young lewd blood that lent it heat

Is also cooler we can well forget.

*[She steps to GORMFLAITH.]*

Rise. Come, for here there is no more to do,

And let us seek your chamber, if you will,

There to confer in greater privacy;

For we have now interment to prepare.

*[She leads GORMFLAITH to the door  
near the bed.]*



You must walk first, you are still the Queen elect.

Gordon  
Bottomley

*[When GORMFLAITH has passed before her GONERIL unsheathes her hunting knife.]*

*Gormflaith (turning in the doorway)*  
What will you do?

*Goneril (thrusting her forward with the haft of the knife)*

On. On. On. Go in.

*[She follows GORMFLAITH out.]*

*After a moment's interval two elderly women, one a little younger than the other, enter by the same door: they wear black hoods and shapeless black gowns with large sleeves that flap like the wings of ungainly birds: between them they carry a heavy cauldron of hot water.*

*The Younger Woman*

We were listening. We were listening.

*The Elder Woman*

We were both listening.

*The Younger Woman*

Did she struggle?

*The Elder Woman* She could not struggle long.

*[They set down the cauldron at the foot of the bed.]*

*The Elder Woman (curtseying to the Queen's body)*

Saving your presence, Madam, we are come

Gordon           To make you sweeter than you'll be hereafter,  
Bottomley       And then be done with you.

*The Younger Woman (curtseying in turn)*

Three days together, my Lady, y'have had me  
    ducked  
For easing a foolish maid at the wrong time;  
But now your breath is stopped and you are  
    colder,  
And you shall be as wet as a drowned rat  
Ere I have done with you.

*The Elder Woman (fumbling in the folds of the robe  
    that hangs on the wall)*

Her pocket is empty; Merryn has been here first.  
Hearken, and then begin:  
You have not touched a royal corpse before,  
But I have stretched a king and an old queen,  
A king's aunt and a king's brother too,  
Without much boasting of a still-born princess;  
So that I know, as a priest knows his prayers,  
All that is written in the chamberlain's book  
About the handling of exalted corpses,  
Stripping them and trussing them for the grave:  
And there it says that the chief corpse-washer  
Shall take for her own use by sacred right  
The coverlid, the upper sheet, the mattress  
Of any bed in which a queen has died,  
And the last robe of state the body wore;  
While humbler helpers may divide among them  
The under sheet, the pillow, and the bed-gown  
Stript from the cooling queen.  
Be thankful, then, and praise me every day  
That I have brought no other women with me  
To spoil you of your share.

*The Younger Woman*

Ah, you have always been a friend to me:  
Many's the time I have said I did not know  
How I could even have lived but for your kindness.

Gordon  
Bottomley

[*The ELDER WOMAN draws down the bedclothes from the Queen's body, loosens them from the bed, and throws them on the floor.*]

*The Elder Woman*

Pull her feet straight: is your mind wandering?

[*She commences to fold the bedclothes, singing as she moves about.*]

A louse crept out of my lady's shift—

Ahummm, Ahummm, Ahee—

Crying "Oi! Oi! We are turned adrift;

The lady's bosom is cold and stiffed,

And her arm-pit's cold for me."

[*While the ELDER WOMAN sings, the YOUNGER WOMAN straightens the Queen's feet and ties them together, draws the pillow from under her head, gathers her hair in one hand and knots it roughly; then she loosens her nightgown, revealing a jewel hung on a cord round the Queen's neck.*]

*The Elder Woman (running to the vacant side of the bed)*

What have you there? Give it to me.

*The Younger Woman*

I found it.

It is mine:

Gordon      *The Elder Woman*  
Bottomley      Leave it.

*The Younger Woman*      Let go.

*The Elder Woman*      Leave it, I say.  
Will you not? Will you not? An eye for a jewel,  
then!

*[She attacks the face of the YOUNGER  
WOMAN with her disengaged hand.]*

*The Younger Woman (starting back)*

Oh!

*[The ELDER WOMAN breaks the cord  
and thrusts the jewel into her pocket.]*

*The Younger Woman*

Aie! Aie! Aie! Old thief! You are always thieving!  
You stole a necklace on your wedding day:  
You could not bear a child, you stole your daughter:  
You stole a shroud the morn your husband died:  
Last week you stole the Princess Regan's comb . .

*[She stumbles into the chair by the bed, and,  
throwing her loose sleeves over her head,  
rocks herself and moans.]*

*The Elder Woman (resuming her clothes-folding and  
her song)*

"The lady's linen's no longer neat;"—  
Ahumm, Ahumm, Ahee—

"Her savour is neither warm nor sweet;  
It's close for two in a winding sheet,  
And lice are too good for worms to eat;  
So here's no place for me."

*[GONERIL enters by the door near the*

*bed: her knife and the hand that holds it are bloody. She pauses a moment irresolutely.*

Gordon  
Bottomley

*The Elder Woman*

Still work for old Hrogneda, little Princess?

*[GONERIL goes straight to the cauldron, passing the women as if they were not there: she kneels and washes her knife and her hand in it. The women retire to the back of the chamber.]*

*Goneril (speaking to herself)*

The way is easy: and it is to be used.

How could this need have been conceived slowly?

In a keen mind it should have leapt and burnt:

What I have done would have been better done

When my sad mother lived and could feel joy.

This striking without thought is better than  
hunting;

She showed more terror than an animal,

She was more shiftless. . . .

A little blood is lightly washed away,

A common stain that need not be remembered;

And a hot spasm of rightness quickly born

Can guide me to kill justly and shall guide.

*[LEAR enters by the door near the bed.]*

*Lear*

Goneril, Gormflaith, Gormflaith. . . . Have you  
seen Gormflaith?

*Goneril*

I led her to her chamber lately, Sir.

Bottomley      Ay, she is in her chamber. She is there.

Have you been there already? Could you not wait?

Daughter, she is bleeding: she is slain.

Yes, she is slain: I did it with a knife:

(Raising her arms and sprinkling the Queen's body)

That now I scatter on the Queen of death  
For signal to her spirit that I can slake  
Her long corrosion of misery with such balm—  
Blood for weeping, terror for woe, death for death,  
A broken body for a broken heart.  
What will you say against me and my deed?

That now you cannot save yourself from me.  
While your blind virgin power still stood apart  
In an unused, unviolated life,  
You judged me in my weakness, and because  
I felt you unflawed I could not answer you ;  
But you have mingled in mortality  
And violently begun the common life  
By fault against your fellows ; and the state,  
The state of Britain that inheres in me  
Not touched by my humanity or sin,  
Passions or privy acts, shall be as hard  
And savage to you as to a murderess.

*Goneril (taking a letter from her girdle)*

I found a warrant in her favoured bosom, King:

She wore this on her heart when you were crown-  
ing her.

Gordon  
Bottomley

*Lear*

But this is not my hand:

*(Looking about him on the floor)*

Where is the other letter?

*Goneril*

Is there another letter? What should it say?

*Lear*

There is no other letter if you have none.

*(Reading)*

"Open your window when the moon is dead,

And I will come again.

The men say everywhere that you are faith-  
less. . . .

And your eyes shifty eyes. Ah, but I love you,  
Gormflaith." . . .

This is not hers: she'd not receive such words.

*Goneril*

Her name stands twice therein: her perfume fills  
it:

My knife went through it ere I found it on her.

*Lear*

The filth is suitably dead. You are my true  
daughter.

*Goneril*

I do not understand how men can govern,

Gordon      Use craft and exercise the duty of cunning,  
Bottomley    Anticipate treason, treachery meet with treach-  
                  ery,  
                  And yet believe a woman because she looks  
                  Straight in their eyes with mournful, trustful  
                  gaze,  
                  And lisps like innocence, all gentleness.  
                  Your Gormflaith could not answer a woman's  
                  eyes.  
                  I did not need to read her in a letter;  
                  I am not woman yet, but I can feel  
                  What untruths are instinctive in my kind,  
                  And how some men desire deceit from us.  
                  Come; let these washers do what they must do:  
                  Or shall your Queen be wrapped and confined  
                  awry?

*[She goes out by the garden doorway.]*

*Lear*

I thought she had been broken long ago:  
She must be wedded and broken, I cannot do it.

*[He follows GONERIL out.]*

*The two women return to the bedside.*

*The Elder Woman*

Poor, masterful King, he is no easier,  
Although his tearful wife is gone at last:  
A wilful girl shall prick and thwart him now.  
Old gossip, we must hasten; the Queen is setting.  
Lend me a pair of pennies to weight her eyes.

*The Younger Woman*

Find your own pennies: then you can steal them  
safely.



*The Elder Woman*

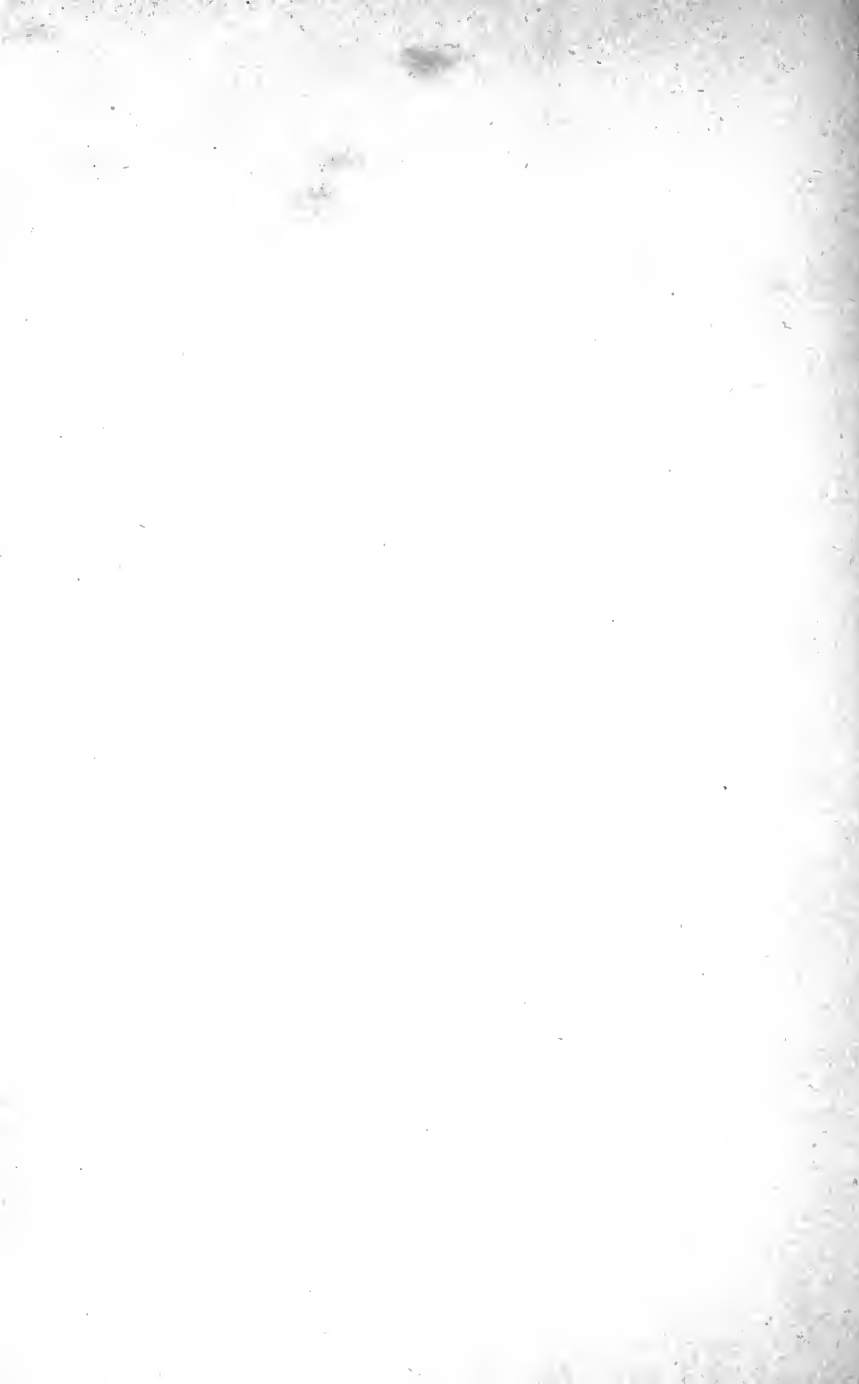
Gordon  
Bottomley

Praise you the gods of Britain, as I do praise them,  
That I have been sweet-natured from my birth,  
And that I lack your unforgiving mind.  
Friend of the worms, help me to lift her clear  
And draw away the under sheet for you;  
Then go and spread the shroud by the hall fire—  
I never could put damp linen on a corpse.

[*She sings.*

The louse made off unhappy and wet;—  
Ahumm, Ahumm, Ahee—  
He's looking for us, the little pet;  
So haste, for her chin's to tie up yet,  
And let us be gone with what we can get—  
Her ring for thee, her gown for Bet,  
Her pocket turned out for me.

CURTAIN.



RUPERT BROOKE



## TIARE TAHITI

Rupert  
Brooke

Mamua, when our laughter ends,  
And hearts and bodies, brown as white,  
Are dust about the doors of friends,  
Or scent ablowing down the night,  
Then, oh! then, the wise agree,  
Comes our immortality.  
Mamua, there waits a land  
Hard for us to understand.  
Out of time, beyond the sun,  
All are one in Paradise,  
You and Pupure are one,  
And Tai, and the ungainly wise.  
There the Eternals are, and there  
The Good, the Lovely, and the True,  
And Types, whose earthly copies were  
The foolish broken things we knew;  
There is the Face, whose ghosts we are;  
The real, the never-setting Star;  
And the Flower, of which we love  
Faint and fading shadows here;  
Never a tear, but only Grief;  
Dance, but not the limbs that move;  
Songs in Song shall disappear;  
Instead of lovers, Love shall be;  
For hearts, Immutability;  
And there, on the Ideal Reef,  
Thunders the Everlasting Sea!

And my laughter, and my pain,  
Shall home to the Eternal Brain;  
And all lovely things, they say,  
Meet in Loveliness again;  
Miri's laugh, Teipo's feet,

Rupert  
Brooke

And the hands of Matua,  
Stars and sunlight there shall meet,  
Coral's hues and rainbows there,  
And Teūra's braided hair;  
And with the starred *tiare's* white,  
And white birds in the dark ravine,  
And *flamboyants* ablaze at night,  
And jewels, and evening's after-green,  
And dawns of pearl and gold and red,  
Mamua, your lovelier head!  
And there'll no more be one who dreams  
Under the ferns, of crumbling stuff,  
Eyes of illusion, mouth that seems,  
All time-entangled human love.  
And you'll no longer swing and sway  
Divinely down the scented shade,  
Where feet to Ambulation fade,  
And moons are lost in endless Day.  
How shall we wind these wreaths of ours,  
Where there are neither heads nor flowers?  
Oh, Heaven's Heaven!—but we'll be missing  
The palms, and sunlight, and the south;  
And there's an end, I think, of kissing,  
When our mouths are one with Mouth. . . .

*Taū here*, Mamua,  
Crown the hair, and come away!  
Hear the calling of the moon,  
And the whispering scents that stray  
About the idle warm lagoon.  
Hasten, hand in human hand,  
Down the dark, the flowered way,  
Along the whiteness of the sand,  
And in the water's soft caress,  
Wash the mind of foolishness,

Mamua, until the day.  
Spend the glittering moonlight there  
Pursuing down the soundless deep  
Limbs that gleam and shadowy hair,  
Or floating lazy, half-asleep.  
Dive and double and follow after,  
Snare in flowers, and kiss, and call,  
With lips that fade, and human laughter,  
And faces individual,  
Well this side of Paradise! . . .  
There's little comfort in the wise.

Rupert  
Brooke

## THE GREAT LOVER

I have been so great a lover: filled my days  
So proudly with the splendour of Love's praise,  
The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,  
Desire illimitable, and still content,  
And all dear names men use, to cheat despair,  
For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear  
Our hearts at random down the dark of life.  
Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife  
Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far,  
My night shall be remembered for a star  
That outshone all the suns of all men's days.  
Shall I not crown them with immortal praise  
Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me  
High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see  
The inenarrable godhead of delight?  
Love is a flame;—we have beaconed the world's night.  
A city:—and we have built it, these and I.  
An emperor:—we have taught the world to die.  
So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,  
And the high cause of Love's magnificence,  
And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names  
Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames,  
And set them as a banner, that men may know,  
To dare the generations, burn, and blow  
Out on the wind of Time, shining and streaming. . . .

These I have loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,  
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;  
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust  
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;  
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;  
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;



And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,      Rupert  
Brooke

Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;  
Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon  
Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss  
Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is  
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen  
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;  
The benison of hot water; furs to touch;  
The good smell of old clothes; and other such—  
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,  
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers  
About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .

Dear names,

And thousand other throng to me! Royal flames;  
Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring;  
Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing;  
Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,  
Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting train;  
Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam  
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home;  
And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold  
Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mould;  
Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;  
And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new;  
And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on grass;—  
All these have been my loves. And these shall pass,  
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,  
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power  
To hold them with me through the gate of Death.  
They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath,  
Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust  
And sacramented covenant to the dust.  
—Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,  
And give what's left of love again, and make

Rupert  
Brooke

New friends, now strangers. . . .

But the best I've known,  
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown  
About the winds of the world, and fades from brains  
Of living men, and dies.

Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again  
This one last gift I give: that after men  
Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed,  
Praise you, 'All these were lovely'; say, 'He loved.'

## BEAUTY AND BEAUTY

Rupert  
Brooke

When Beauty and Beauty meet  
All naked, fair to fair,  
The earth is crying-sweet,  
And scattering-bright the air,  
Eddying, dizzying, closing round,  
With soft and drunken laughter;  
Veiling all that may befall  
After—after—

Where Beauty and Beauty met,  
Earth's still a-tremble there,  
And winds are scented yet,  
And memory-soft the air,  
Bosoming, folding glints of light,  
And shreds of shadowy laughter;  
Not the tears that fill the years  
After—after—

HEAVEN

Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,  
Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)  
Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,  
Each secret fishy hope or fear.  
Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;  
But is there anything Beyond?  
This life cannot be All, they swear,  
For how unpleasant, if it were!  
One may not doubt that, somehow, Good  
Shall come of Water and of Mud;  
And, sure, the reverent eye must see  
A Purpose in Liquidity.  
We darkly know, by Faith we cry,  
The future is not Wholly Dry.  
Mud unto mud!—Death eddies near—  
Not here the appointed End, not here!  
But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,  
Is wetter water, slimier slime!  
And there (they trust) there swimmeth One  
Who swam ere rivers were begun,  
Immense, of fishy form and mind,  
Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;  
And under that Almighty Fin,  
The littlest fish may enter in.  
Oh! never fly conceals a hook,  
Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,  
But more than mundane weeds are there,  
And mud, celestially fair;  
Fat caterpillars drift around,  
And Paradisal grubs are found;  
Unfading moths, immortal flies,  
And the worm that never dies.  
And in that Heaven of all their wish,  
There shall be no more land, say fish.

## CLOUDS

Rupert  
Brooke

Down the blue night the unending columns press  
In noiseless tumult, break and wave and flow,  
Now tread the far South, or lift rounds of snow  
Up to the white moon's hidden loveliness.  
Some pause in their grave wandering comradeless,  
And turn with profound gesture vague and slow,  
As who would pray good for the world, but know  
Their benediction empty as they bless.

They say that the Dead die not, but remain  
Near to the rich heirs of their grief and mirth.  
I think they ride the calm mid-heaven, as these,  
In wise majestic melancholy train,  
And watch the moon, and the still-raging seas,  
And men, coming and going on the earth.

Rupert  
Brooke

SONNET

*(Suggested by some of the Proceedings of the Society for  
Psychical Research)*

Not with vain tears, when we're beyond the sun,  
We'll beat on the substantial doors, nor tread  
Those dusty high-roads of the aimless dead  
Plaintive for Earth; but rather turn and run  
Down some close-covered by-way of the air,  
Some low sweet alley between wind and wind,  
Stoop under faint gleams, thread the shadows, find  
Some whispering ghost-forgotten nook, and there

Spend in pure converse our eternal day;  
Think each in each, immediately wise;  
Learn all we lacked before; hear, know, and say  
What this tumultuous body now denies;  
And feel, who have laid our groping hands away;  
And see, no longer blinded by our eyes.

## THE SOLDIER

Rupert  
Brooke

If I should die, think only this of me:

That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England  
given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.





WILLIAM H. DAVIES



## THUNDERSTORMS

William  
H. Davies

My mind has thunderstorms,  
That brood for heavy hours:  
Until they rain me words,  
My thoughts are drooping flowers  
And sulking, silent birds.

Yet come, dark thunderstorms,  
And brood your heavy hours;  
For when you rain me words  
My thoughts are dancing flowers  
And joyful singing birds.

William  
H. Davies

## THE MIND'S LIBERTY

The mind, with its own eyes and ears,  
May for these others have no care;  
No matter where this body is,  
The mind is free to go elsewhere.  
My mind can be a sailor, when  
This body's still confined to land;  
And turn these mortals into trees,  
That walk in Fleet Street or the Strand.

So, when I'm passing Charing Cross,  
Where porters work both night and day,  
I oftentimes hear sweet Malpas Brook,  
That flows thrice fifty miles away.  
And when I'm passing near St Paul's,  
I see, beyond the dome and crowd,  
Twm Barlum, that green pap in Gwent,  
With its dark nipple in a cloud.

## THE MOON

William  
H. Davies

Thy beauty haunts me heart and soul,  
    Oh thou fair Moon, so close and bright;  
Thy beauty makes me like the child  
    That cries aloud to own thy light:  
The little child that lifts each arm  
To press thee to her bosom warm.

Though there are birds that sing this night  
    With thy white beams across their throats,  
Let my deep silence speak for me  
    More than for them their sweetest notes:  
Who worships thee till music fails,  
Is greater than thy nightingales.

William  
H. Davies

## WHEN ON A SUMMER'S MORN

When on a summer's morn I wake,  
And open my two eyes,  
Out to the clear, born-singing rills  
My bird-like spirit flies,

To hear the Blackbird, Cuckoo, Thrush,  
Or any bird in song;  
And common leaves that hum all day,  
Without a throat or tongue.

And when Time strikes the hour for sleep,  
Back in my room alone,  
My heart has many a sweet bird's song—  
And one that's all my own.

## A GREAT TIME

William  
H. Davies

Sweet Chance, that led my steps abroad,  
Beyond the town, where wild flowers grow—  
A rainbow and a cuckoo, Lord,  
How rich and great the times are now!  
Know, all ye sheep  
And cows, that keep  
On staring that I stand so long  
In grass that's wet from heavy rain—  
A rainbow and a cuckoo's song  
May never come together again;  
May never come  
This side the tomb.

William  
H. Davies

## THE HAWK

Thou dost not fly, thou art not perched,  
The air is all around:  
What is it that can keep thee set,  
From falling to the ground?  
The concentration of thy mind  
Supports thee in the air;  
As thou dost watch the small young birds,  
With such a deadly care.

My mind has such a hawk as thou,  
It is an evil mood;  
It comes when there's no cause for grief,  
And on my joys doth brood.  
Then do I see my life in parts;  
The earth receives my bones,  
The common air absorbs my mind—  
It knows not flowers from stones.



## SWEET STAY-AT-HOME

William  
H. Davies

Sweet Stay-at-Home, sweet Well-content,  
Thou knowest of no strange continent:  
Thou hast not felt thy bosom keep  
A gentle motion with the deep;  
Thou hast not sailed in Indian seas,  
Where scent comes forth in every breeze.  
Thou hast not seen the rich grape grow  
For miles, as far as eyes can go;  
Thou hast not seen a summer's night  
When maids could sew by a worm's light;  
Nor the North Sea in spring send out  
Bright hues that like birds flit about  
In solid cages of white ice—  
Sweet Stay-at-Home, sweet Love-one-place.  
Thou hast not seen black fingers pick  
White cotton when the bloom is thick,  
Nor heard black throats in harmony;  
Nor hast thou sat on stones that lie  
Flat on the earth, that once did rise  
To hide proud kings from common eyes.  
Thou hast not seen plains full of bloom  
Where green things had such little room  
They pleased the eye like fairer flowers—  
Sweet Stay-at-Home, all these long hours.  
Sweet Well-content, sweet Love-one-place,  
Sweet, simple maid, bless thy dear face;  
For thou hast made more homely stuff  
Nurture thy gentle self enough;  
I love thee for a heart that's kind—  
Not for the knowledge in thy mind.

William  
H. Davies

## A FLEETING PASSION

Thou shalt not laugh, thou shalt not romp,  
Let's grimly kiss with bated breath;  
As quietly and solemnly  
As Life when it is kissing Death.  
Now in the silence of the grave,  
My hand is squeezing that soft breast;  
While thou dost in such passion lie,  
It mocks me with its look of rest.

But when the morning comes at last,  
And we must part, our passions cold,  
You'll think of some new feather, scarf  
To buy with my small piece of gold;  
And I'll be dreaming of green lanes,  
Where little things with beating hearts  
Hold shining eyes between the leaves,  
Till men with horses pass, and carts.

## THE BIRD OF PARADISE

William  
H. Davies

Here comes Kate Summers, who, for gold,  
Takes any man to bed:

“ You knew my friend, Nell Barnes,” she said;  
“ You knew Nell Barnes—she’s dead.

“ Nell Barnes was bad on all you men,  
Unclean, a thief as well;  
Yet all my life I have not found  
A better friend than Nell.

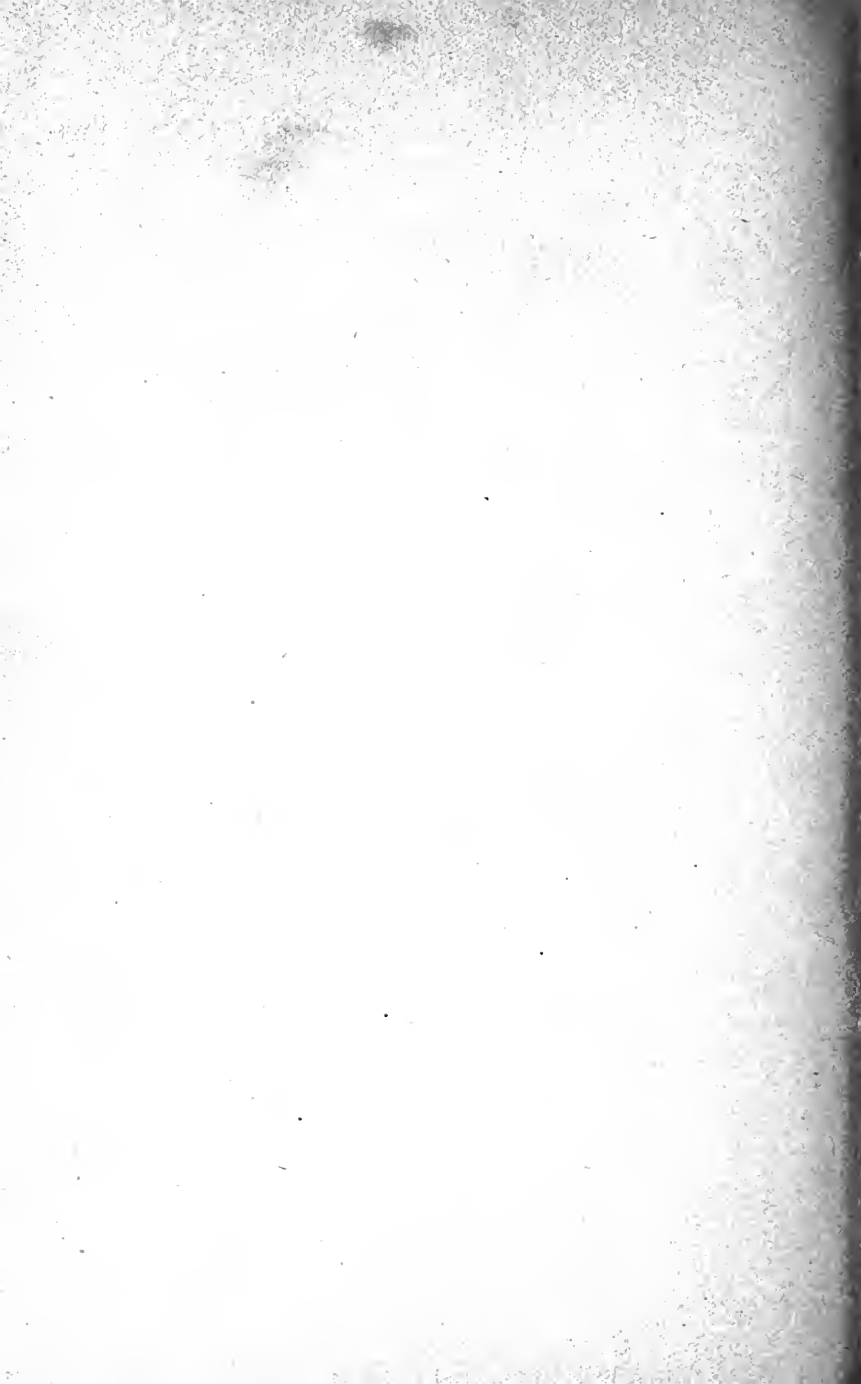
“ So I sat at her side at last,  
For hours, till she was dead;  
And yet she had no sense at all  
Of any word I said.

“ For all her cry but came to this—  
‘ Not for the world! Take care:  
Don’t touch that bird of paradise,  
Perched on the bed-post there!’ ”

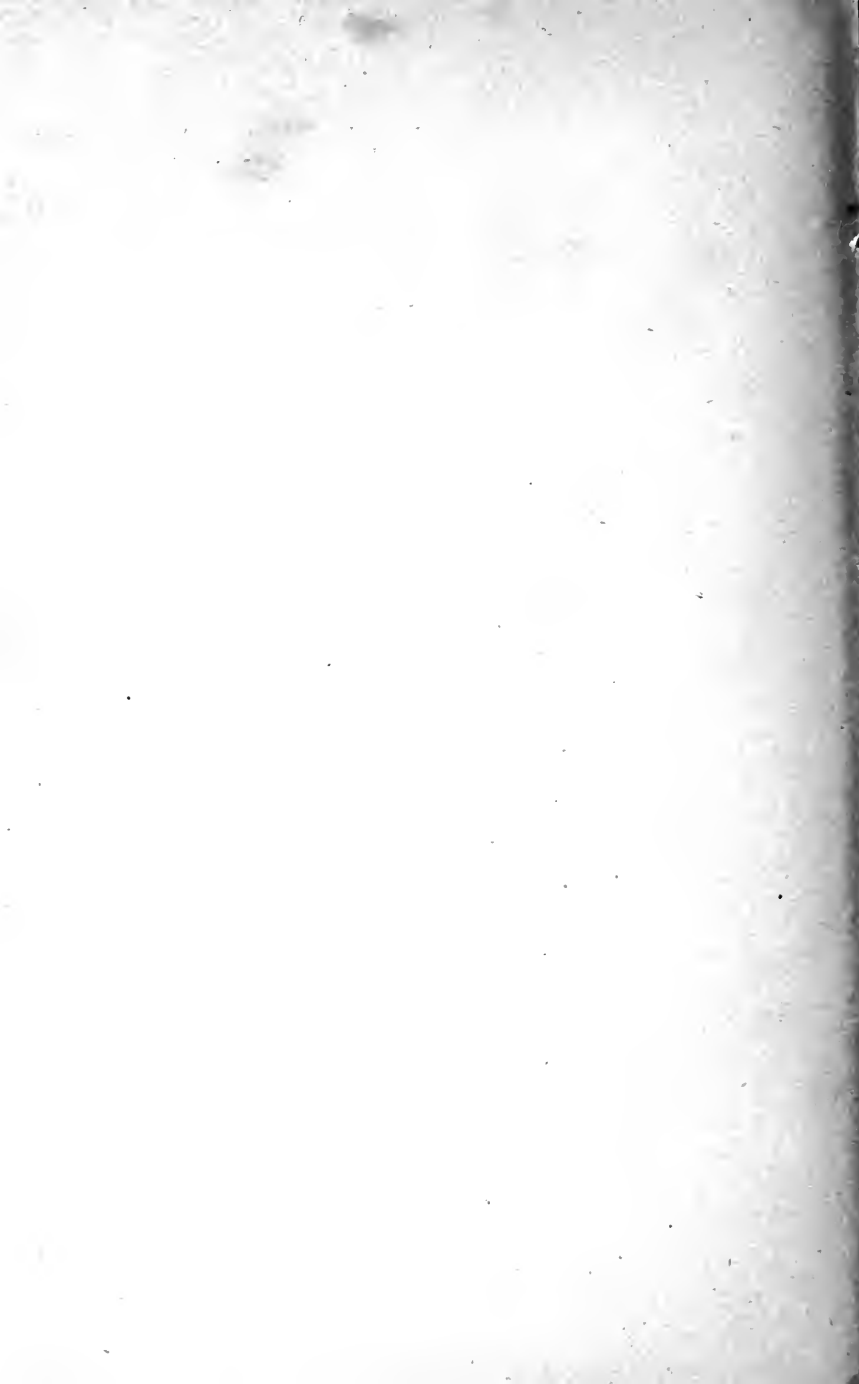
“ I asked her would she like some grapes,  
Some damsons ripe and sweet;  
A custard made with new-laid eggs,  
Or tender fowl to eat.

“ I promised I would follow her,  
To see her in her grave;  
And buy a wreath with borrowed pence,  
If nothing I could save.

“ Yet still her cry but came to this—  
‘ Not for the world! Take care:  
Don’t touch that bird of paradise,  
Perched on the bed-post there!’ ”



WALTER DE LA MARE



## MUSIC

Walter  
de la  
Mare

When music sounds, gone is the earth I know,  
And all her lovely things even lovelier grow;  
Her flowers in vision flame, her forest trees  
Lift burdened branches, stilled with ecstasies.

When music sounds, out of the water rise  
Naiads whose beauty dims my waking eyes,  
Rapt in strange dream burns each enchanted face,  
With solemn echoing stirs their dwelling-place.

When music sounds, all that I was I am  
Ere to this haunt of brooding dust I came;  
And from Time's woods break into distant song  
The swift-winged hours, as I hasten along.

Walter  
de la  
Mare

## WANDERERS

Wide are the meadows of night,  
And daisies are shining there,  
Tossing their lovely dew,  
Lustrous and fair;  
And through these sweet fields go,  
Wanderers amid the stars—  
Venus, Mercury, Uranus, Neptune,  
Saturn, Jupiter, Mars.

'Tired in their silver, they move,  
And circling, whisper and say,  
Fair are the blossoming meads of delight  
Through which we stray.



## MELMILLO

Walter  
de la  
Mare

Three and thirty birds there stood  
In an elder in a wood;  
Called Melmillo—flew off three,  
Leaving thirty in the tree;  
Called Melmillo—nine now gone,  
And the boughs held twenty-one;  
Called Melmillo—and eighteen  
Left but three to nod and preen;  
Called Melmillo—three—two—one—  
Now of birds were feathers none.

Then stole slim Melmillo in  
To that wood all dusk and green,  
And with lean long palms outspread  
Softly a strange dance did tread;  
Not a note of music she  
Had for echoing company;  
All the birds were flown to rest  
In the hollow of her breast;  
In the wood—thorn, elder, willow—  
Danced alone—lone danced Melmillo.

ALEXANDER

It was the Great Alexander,  
Capped with a golden helm,  
Sate in the ages, in his floating ship,  
In a dead calm.

Voices of sea-maids singing  
Wandered across the deep:  
The sailors labouring on their oars  
Rowed as in sleep.

All the high pomp of Asia,  
Charmed by that siren lay,  
Out of their weary and dreaming minds  
Faded away.

Like a bold boy sate their Captain,  
His glamour withered and gone,  
In the souls of his brooding mariners,  
While the song pined on.

Time like a falling dew,  
Life like the scene of a dream  
Laid between slumber and slumber  
Only did seem. . . .

O Alexander, then,  
In all us mortals too,  
Wax not so overbold  
On the wave dark-blue!

Come the calm starry night,  
Who then will hear  
Aught save the singing  
Of the sea-maids clear?

## THE MOCKING FAIRY

Walter  
de la  
Mare

‘ Won’t you look out of your window, Mrs Gill? ’

Quoth the Fairy, nidding, nodding in the garden;

‘ *Can’t* you look out of your window, Mrs Gill? ’

Quoth the Fairy, laughing softly in the garden;

But the air was still, the cherry boughs were still,

And the ivy-tod ’neath the empty sill,

And never from her window looked out Mrs Gill

On the Fairy shrilly mocking in the garden.

‘ What have they done with you, you poor Mrs Gill? ’

Quoth the Fairy brightly glancing in the garden;

‘ Where have they hidden you, you poor old Mrs  
Gill? ’

Quoth the Fairy dancing lightly in the garden;

But night’s faint veil now wrapped the hill,

Stark ’neath the stars stood the dead-still Mill,

And out of her cold cottage never answered Mrs Gill

The Fairy mimbling mambling in the garden.

Walter  
de la  
Mare

## FULL MOON

One night as Dick lay half asleep,  
    Into his drowsy eyes  
A great still light began to creep  
    From out the silent skies.  
It was the lovely moon's, for when  
    He raised his dreamy head,  
Her surge of silver filled the pane  
    And streamed across his bed.  
So, for awhile, each gazed at each—  
    Dick and the solemn moon—  
Till, climbing slowly on her way,  
    She vanished, and was gone.

## OFF THE GROUND

Walter  
de la  
Mare

Three jolly Farmers  
Once bet a pound  
Each dance the others would  
Off the ground.  
Out of their coats  
They slipped right soon,  
And neat and nicesome  
Put each his shoon.  
One—Two—Three!  
And away they go,  
Not too fast,  
And not too slow;  
Out from the elm-tree's  
Noonday shadow,  
Into the sun  
And across the meadow.  
Past the schoolroom,  
With knees well bent,  
Fingers a-flicking,  
They dancing went.  
Up sides and over,  
And round and round,  
They crossed click-clacking  
The Parish bound;  
By Tupman's meadow  
They did their mile,  
Tee-to-tum  
On a three-barred stile.  
Then straight through Whipham,  
Downhill to Week,  
Footing it lightsome,  
But not too quick,  
Up fields to Watchet,

Walter  
de la  
Mare

And on through Wye,  
Till seven fine churches  
They'd seen skip by—  
Seven fine churches,  
And five old mills,  
Farms in the valley,  
And sheep on the hills;  
Old Man's Acre  
And Dead Man's Pool  
All left behind,  
As they danced through Wool.  
And Wool gone by,  
Like tops that seem  
To spin in sleep  
They danced in dream:  
Withy—Wellover—  
Wassop—Wo—  
Like an old clock  
Their heels did go.  
A league and a league  
And a league they went,  
And not one weary,  
And not one spent.  
And lo, and behold!  
Past Willow-cum-Leigh  
Stretched with its waters  
The great green sea.  
Says Farmer Bates,  
' I puffs and I blows,  
What's under the water,  
Why, no man knows !'  
Says Farmer Giles,  
' My mind comes weak,  
And a good man drowned  
Is far to seek.'

But Farmer Turvey,  
On twirling toes,  
Up's with his gaiters,  
And in he goes:  
Down where the mermaids  
Pluck and play  
On their twangling harps  
In a sea-green day;  
Down where the mermaids,  
Finned and fair,  
Sleek with their combs  
Their yellow hair. . . .  
Bates and Giles—  
On the shingle sat,  
Gazing at Turvey's  
Floating hat.  
But never a ripple  
Nor bubble told  
Where he was supping  
Off plates of gold.  
Never an echo  
Rilled through the sea  
Of the feasting and dancing  
And minstrelsy.  
They called—called—called:  
Came no reply:  
Nought but the ripples'  
Sandy sigh.  
Then glum and silent  
They sat instead,  
Vacantly brooding  
On home and bed,  
Till both together  
Stood up and said:—  
'Us knows not, dreams not,

Walter  
de la  
Mare

Walter  
de la  
Mare

Where you be,  
Turvey, unless  
In the deep blue sea;  
But axcusing silver—  
And it comes most willing—  
Here's us two paying  
Our forty shilling;  
For it's sartin sure, Turvey,  
Safe and sound,  
You danced us square, Turvey,  
Off the ground!'



JOHN DRINKWATER



## A TOWN WINDOW

John  
Drinkwater

Beyond my window in the night  
Is but a drab inglorious street,  
Yet there the frost and clean starlight  
As over Warwick woods are sweet.

Under the grey drift of the town  
The crocus works among the mould  
As eagerly as those that crown  
The Warwick spring in flame and gold.

And when the tramway down the hill  
Across the cobbles moans and rings,  
There is about my window-sill  
The tumult of a thousand wings.

John  
Drinkwater

OF GREATHAM  
*(To those who live there)*

For peace, than knowledge more desirable,  
Into your Sussex quietness I came,  
When summer's green and gold and azure fell  
Over the world in flame.

And peace upon your pasture-lands I found,  
Where grazing flocks drift on continually,  
As little clouds that travel with no sound  
Across a windless sky.

Out of your oaks the birds call to their mates  
That brood among the pines, where hidden deep  
From curious eyes a world's adventure waits  
In columned choirs of sleep.

Under the calm ascension of the night  
We heard the mellow lapsing and return  
Of night-owls purring in their groundling flight  
Through lanes of darkling fern.

Unbroken peace when all the stars were drawn  
Back to their lairs of light, and ranked along  
From shire to shire the downs out of the dawn  
Were risen in golden song.

. . . . .

I sing of peace who have known the large unrest  
Of men bewildered in their travelling,  
And I have known the bridal earth unblest  
By the brigades of spring.

I have known that loss. And now the broken  
thought

Of nations marketing in death I know,  
The very winds to threnodies are wrought  
That on your downlands blow.

John  
Drinkwater

I sing of peace. Was it but yesterday  
I came among your roses and your corn?  
Then momentarily amid this wrath I pray  
For yesterday reborn.

THE CARVER IN STONE

He was a man with wide and patient eyes,  
Grey, like the drift of twitch-fires blown in June,  
That, without fearing, searched if any wrong  
Might threaten from your heart. Grey eyes he had  
Under a brow was drawn because he knew  
So many seasons to so many pass  
Of upright service, loyal, unabased  
Before the world seducing, and so, barren  
Of good words praising and thought that mated his.  
He carved in stone. Out of his quiet life  
He watched as any faithful seaman charged  
With tidings of the myriad faring sea,  
And thoughts and premonitions through his mind  
Sailing as ships from strange and storied lands  
His hungry spirit held, till all they were  
Found living witness in the chiselled stone.  
Slowly out of the dark confusion, spread  
By life's innumerable venturings  
Over his brain, he would triumph into the light  
Of one clear mood, unblemished of the blind  
Legions of errant thought that cried about  
His rapt seclusion: as a pearl unsoiled,  
Nay, rather washed to lonelier chastity,  
In gritty mud. And then would come a bird,  
A flower, or the wind moving upon a flower,  
A beast at pasture, or a clustered fruit,  
A peasant face as were the saints of old,  
The leer of custom, or the bow of the moon  
Swung in miraculous poise—some stray from the world  
Of things created by the eternal mind  
In joy articulate. And his perfect mood  
Would dwell about the token of God's mood,  
Until in bird or flower or moving wind

Or flock or shepherd or the troops of heaven  
It sprang in one fierce moment of desire  
To visible form.

Then would his chisel work among the stone,  
Persuading it of petal or of limb  
Or starry curve, till risen anew there sang  
Shape out of chaos, and again the vision  
Of one mind single from the world was pressed  
Upon the daily custom of the sky  
Or field or the body of man.

John  
Drinkwater

His people  
Had many gods for worship. The tiger-god,  
The owl, the dewlapped bull, the running pard,  
The camel, and the lizard of the slime,  
The ram with quivering fleece and fluted horn,  
The crested eagle and the doming bat  
Were sacred. And the king and his high priests  
Decreed a temple, wide on columns huge,  
Should top the cornlands to the sky's far line.  
They bade the carvers carve along the walls  
Images of their gods, each one to carve  
As he desired, his choice to name his god. . . .  
And many came; and he among them, glad  
Of three leagues' travel through the singing air  
Of dawn among the boughs yet bare of green,  
The eager flight of the spring leading his blood  
Into swift lofty channels of the air,  
Proud as an eagle riding to the sun. . . .  
An eagle, clean of pinion—there's his choice.

Daylong they worked under the growing roof,  
One at his leopard, one the staring ram,  
And he winning his eagle from the stone,  
Until each man had carved one image out,  
Arow beyond the portal of the house.

John  
Drinkwater

They stood arow, the company of gods,  
Camel and bat, lizard and bull and ram,  
The pard and owl, dead figures on the wall,  
Figures of habit driven on the stone  
By chisels governed by no heat of the brain  
But drudges of hands that moved by easy rule.  
Proudly recorded mood was none, no thought  
Plucked from the dark battalions of the mind  
And throned in everlasting sight. But one  
God of them all was witness of belief  
And large adventure dared. His eagle spread  
Wide pinions on a cloudless ground of heaven,  
Glad with the heart's high courage of that dawn  
Moving upon the ploughlands newly sown,  
Dead stone the rest. He looked, and knew it so.

Then came the king with priests and counsellors  
And many chosen of the people, wise  
With words weary of custom, and eyes askew  
That watched their neighbour face for any news  
Of the best way of judgment, till, each sure  
None would determine with authority,  
All spoke in prudent praise. One liked the owl  
Because an owl blinked on the beam of his barn.  
One, hoarse with crying gospels in the street,  
Praised most the ram, because the common folk  
Wore breeches made of ram's wool. One declared  
The tiger pleased him best,—the man who carved  
The tiger-god was halt out of the womb—  
A man to praise, being so pitiful.  
And one, whose eyes dwelt in a distant void,  
With spell and omen pat upon his lips,  
And a purse for any crystal prophet ripe,  
A zealot of the mist, gazed at the bull—  
A lean ill-shapen bull of meagre lines



That scarce the steel had graved upon the stone—  
Saying that here was very mystery  
And truth, did men but know. And one there was  
Who praised his eagle, but remembering  
The lither pinion of the swift, the curve  
That liked him better of the mirrored swan.  
And they who carved the tiger-god and ram,  
The camel and the pard, the owl and bull,  
And lizard, listened greedily, and made  
Humble denial of their worthiness,  
And when the king his royal judgment gave  
That all had fashioned well, and bade that each  
Re-shape his chosen god along the walls  
Till all the temple boasted of their skill,  
They bowed themselves in token that as this  
Never had carvers been so fortunate.

John  
Drinkwater

Only the man with wide and patient eyes  
Made no denial, neither bowed his head.  
Already while they spoke his thoughts had gone  
Far from his eagle, leaving it for a sign  
Loyally wrought of one deep breath of life,  
And played about the image of a toad  
That crawled among his ivy leaves. A queer  
Puff-bellied toad, with eyes that always stared  
Sidelong at heaven and saw no heaven there,  
Weak-hammed, and with a throttle somehow twisted  
Beyond full wholesome draughts of air, and skin  
Of wrinkled lips, the only zest or will  
The little flashing tongue searching the leaves.  
And king and priest, chosen and counsellor,  
Babbling out of their thin and jealous brains,  
Seemed strangely one; a queer enormous toad  
Panting under giant leaves of dark,  
Sunk in the loins, peering into the day.

John  
Drinkwater

Their judgment wry he counted not for wrong  
More than the fabled poison of the toad  
Striking at simple wits; how should their thought  
Or word in praise or blame come near the peace  
That shone in seasonable hours above  
The patience of his spirit's husbandry?  
They foolish and not seeing, how should he  
Spend anger there or fear—great ceremonies  
Equal for none save great antagonists?  
The grave indifference of his heart before them  
Was moved by laughter innocent of hate,  
Chastising clean of spite, that moulded them  
Into the antic likeness of his toad  
Bidding for laughter underneath the leaves.

He bowed not, nor disputed, but he saw  
Those ill-created joyless gods, and loathed,  
And saw them creeping, creeping round the walls,  
Death breeding death, wile witnessing to wile,  
And sickened at the dull iniquity  
Should be rewarded, and for ever breathe  
Contagion on the folk gathered in prayer.  
His truth should not be doomed to march among  
This falsehood to the ages. He was called,  
And he must labour there; if so the king  
Would grant it, where the pillars bore the roof  
A galleried way of meditation nursed  
Secluded time, with wall of ready stone  
In panels for the carver set between  
The windows—there his chisel should be set,—  
It was his plea. And the king spoke of him,  
Scorning, as one lack-fettle, among all these  
Eager to take the riches of renown;  
One fearful of the light or knowing nothing  
Of light's dimension, a witling who would throw

Honour aside and praise spoken aloud  
All men of heart should covet. Let him go  
Grubbing out of the sight of those who knew  
The worth of substance; there was his proper trade.

John  
Drinkwater

A squat and curious toad indeed. . . . The eyes,  
Patient and grey, were dumb as were the lips,  
That, fixed and governed, hoarded from them all  
The larger laughter lifting in his heart.  
Straightway about his gallery he moved,  
Measured the windows and the virgin stone,  
Till all was weighed and patterned in his brain.  
Then first where most the shadows struck the wall,  
Under the sills, and centre of the base,  
From floor to sill out of the stone was wooed  
Memorial folly, as from the chisel leapt  
His chastening laughter searching priest and king—  
A huge and wrinkled toad, with legs asplay.  
And belly loaded, leering with great eyes  
Busily fixed upon the void.

All days

His chisel was the first to ring across  
The temple's quiet; and at fall of dusk  
Passing among the carvers homeward, they  
Would speak of him as mad, or weak against  
The challenge of the world, and let him go  
Lonely, as was his will, under the night  
Of stars or cloud or summer's folded sun,  
Through crop and wood and pastureland to sleep.  
None took the narrow stair as wondering  
How did his chisel prosper in the stone,  
Unvisited his labour and forgot.  
And times when he would lean out of his height  
And watch the gods growing along the walls,

John  
Drinkwater

The row of carvers in their linen coats  
Took in his vision a virtue that alone  
Carving they had not nor the thing they carved.  
Knowing the health that flowed about his close  
Imagining, the daily quiet won  
From process of his clean and supple craft,  
Those carvers there, far on the floor below,  
Would haply be transfigured in his thought  
Into a gallant company of men  
Glad of the strict and loyal reckoning  
That proved in the just presence of the brain  
Each chisel-stroke. How surely would he prosper  
In pleasant talk at easy hours with men  
So fashioned if it might be—and his eyes  
Would pass again to those dead gods that grew  
In spreading evil round the temple walls;  
And, one dead pressure made, the carvers moved  
Along the wall to mould and mould again  
The self-same god, their chisels on the stone  
Tapping in dull precision as before,  
And he would turn, back to his lonely truth.

He carved apace. And first his people's gods,  
About the toad, out of their sterile time,  
Under his hand thrilled and were recreate.  
The bull, the pard, the camel and the ram,  
Tiger and owl and bat—all were the signs  
Visibly made body on the stone  
Of sightless thought adventuring the host  
That is mere spirit; these the bloom achieved  
By secret labour in the flowing wood  
Of rain and air and wind and continent sun. . . .  
His tiger, lithe, immobile in the stone,  
A swift destruction for a moment leashed,  
Sprang crying from the jealous stealth of men

Opposed in cunning watch, with engines hid  
Of torment and calamitous desire.  
His leopard, swift on lean and paltry limbs,  
Was fear in flight before accusing faith.  
His bull, with eyes that often in the dusk  
Would lift from the sweet meadow grass to watch  
Him homeward passing, bore on massy beam  
The burden of the patient of the earth.  
His camel bore the burden of the damned,  
Being gaunt, with eyes aslant along the nose.  
He had a friend, who hammered bronze and iron  
And cupped the moonstone on a silver ring,  
One constant like himself, would come at night  
Or bid him as a guest, when they would make  
Their poets touch a starrier height, or search  
Together with unparsimonious mind  
The crowded harbours of mortality.  
And there were jests, wholesome as harvest ale,  
Of homely habit, bred of hearts that dared  
Judgment of laughter under the eternal eye:  
This frolic wisdom was his carven owl.  
His ram was lordship on the lonely hills,  
Alert and fleet, content only to know  
The wind mightily pouring on his fleece,  
With yesterday and all unrisen suns  
Poorer than disinherited ghosts. His bat  
Was ancient envy made a mockery,  
Cowering below the newer eagle carved  
Above the arches with wide pinion spread,  
His faith's dominion of that happy dawn.

And so he wrought the gods upon the wall,  
Living and crying out of his desire,  
Out of his patient incorruptible thought,  
Wrought them in joy was wages to his faith.

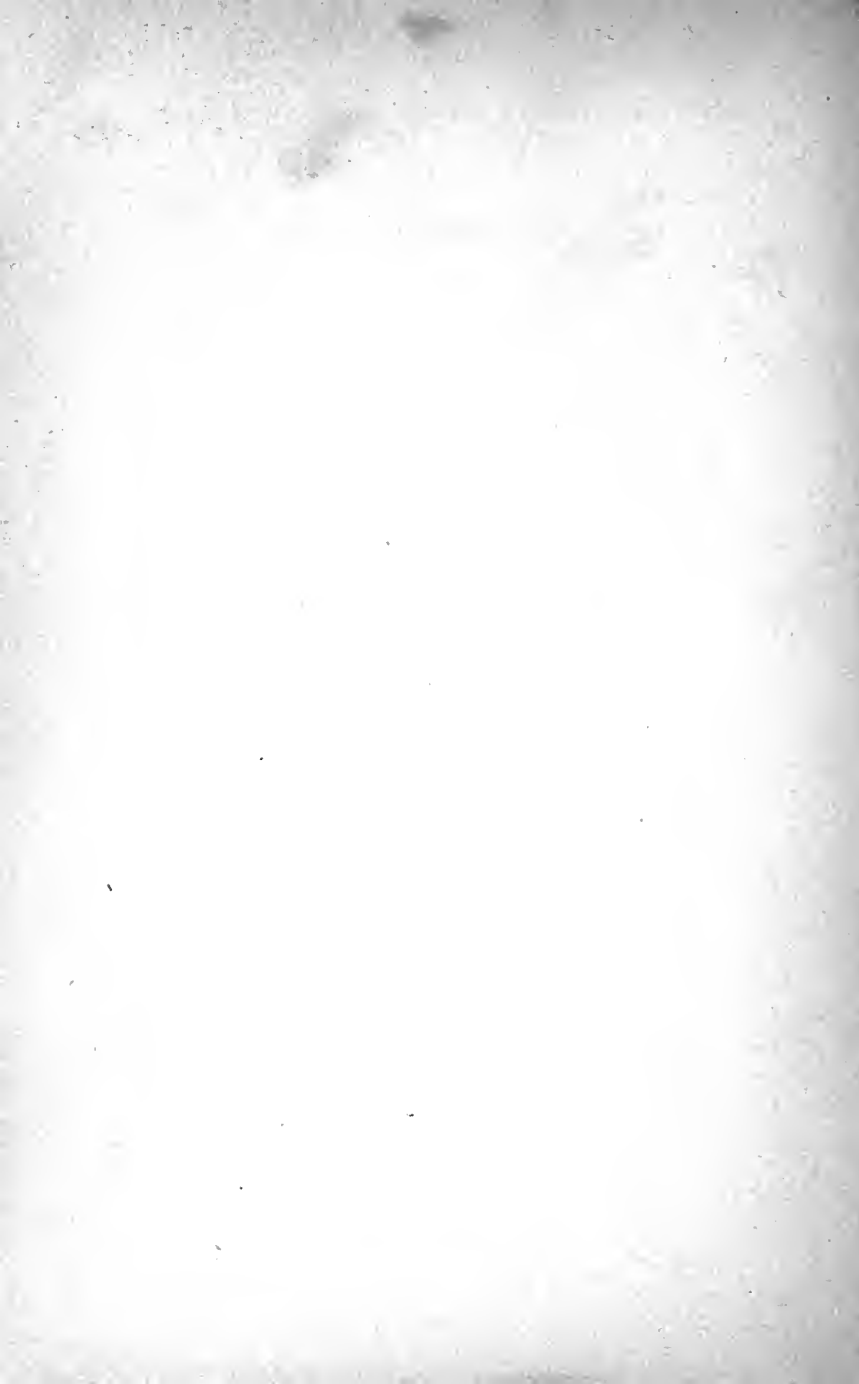
John  
Drinkwater

And other than the gods he made. The stalks  
Of bluebells heavy with the news of spring,  
The vine loaded with plenty of the year,  
And swallows, merely tenderness of thought  
Bidding the stone to small and fragile flight;  
Leaves, the thin relics of autumnal boughs,  
Or massed in June. . . .  
All from their native pressure bloomed and sprang  
Under his shaping hand into a proud  
And governed image of the central man,—  
Their moulding, charts of all his travelling.  
And all were deftly ordered, duly set  
Between the windows, underneath the sills,  
And roofward, as a motion rightly planned,  
Till on the wall, out of the sullen stone,  
A glory blazed, his vision manifest,  
His wonder captive. And he was content.

And when the builders and the carvers knew  
Their labours done, and high the temple stood  
Over the cornlands, king and counsellor  
And priest and chosen of the people came  
Among a ceremonial multitude  
To dedication. And, below the thrones  
Where king and archpriest ruled above the throng,  
Highest among the ranked artificers  
The carvers stood. And when, the temple vowed  
To holy use, tribute and choral praise  
Given as was ordained, the king looked down  
Upon the gathered folk, and bade them see  
The comely gods fashioned about the walls,  
And keep in honour men whose precious skill  
Could so adorn the sessions of their worship,  
Gravely the carvers bowed them to the ground.  
Only the man with wide and patient eyes

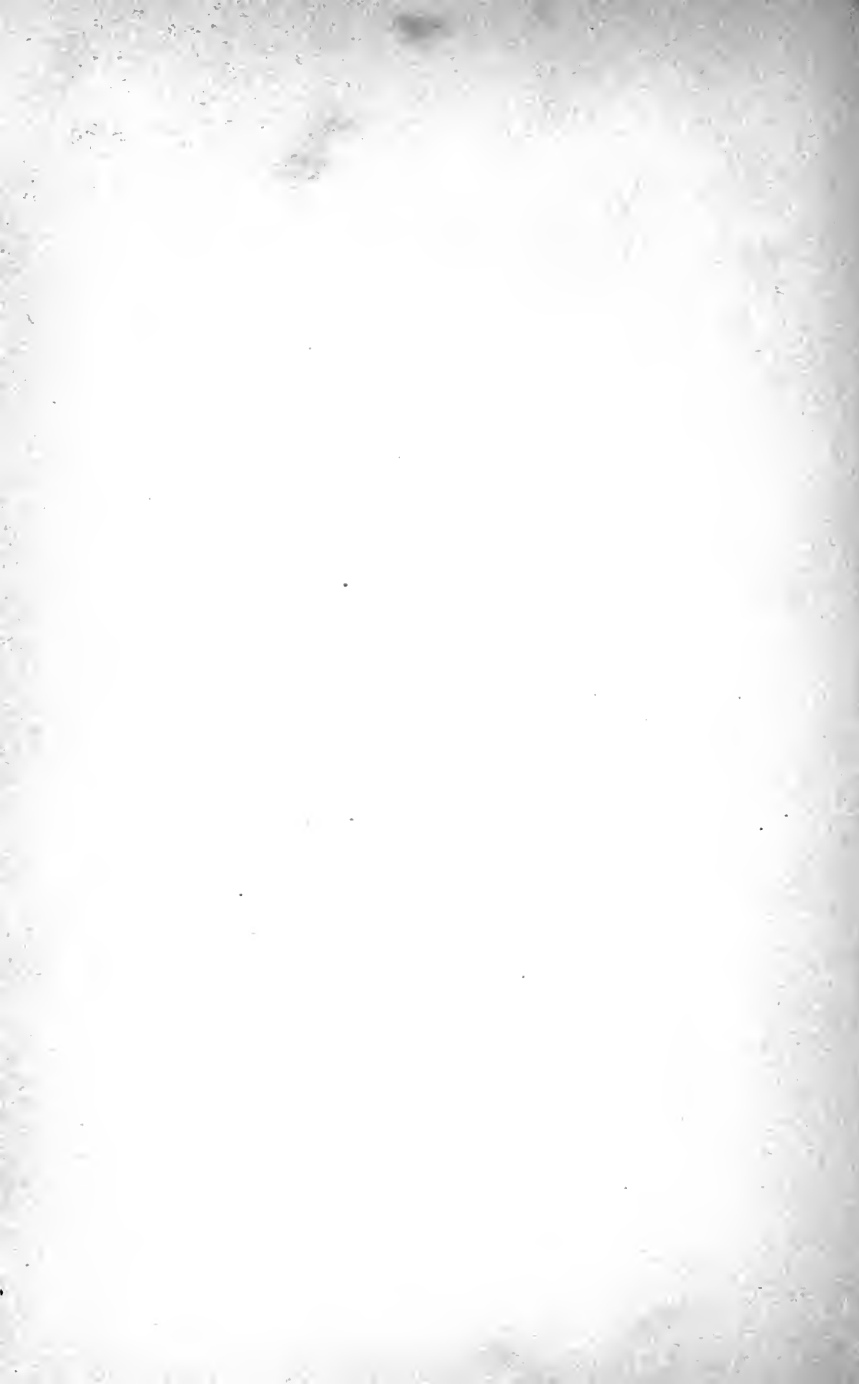
Stood not among them; nor did any come  
To count his labour, where he watched alone  
Above the coloured throng. He heard, and looked  
Again upon his work, and knew it good,  
Smiled on his toad, passed down the stair unseen,  
And sang across the teeming meadows home.

John  
Drinkwater





JAMES ELROY FLECKER



## THE OLD SHIPS

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep  
Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,  
With leaden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep  
For Famagusta and the hidden sun  
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire;  
And all those ships were certainly so old—  
Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,  
Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,  
The pirate Genoese  
Hell-raked them till they rolled  
Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold.  
But now through friendly seas they softly run,  
Painted the mid-sea blue or shore-sea green,  
Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen  
Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn  
And image tumbled on a rose-swept bay  
A drowsy ship of some yet older day;  
And, wonder's breath indrawn,  
Thought I—who knows—who knows—but in that  
same

(Fished up beyond Aeaea, patched up new  
—Stern painted brighter blue—)  
That talkative, bald-headed seaman came  
(Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)  
From Troy's doom-crimson shore,  
And with great lies about his wooden horse  
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship—who knows, who knows?  
—And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain  
To see the mast burst open with a rose,  
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

## A FRAGMENT

O pouring westering streams  
Shouting that I have leapt the mountain bar,  
Downcurve on curve my journey's white way gleams—  
My road along the river of return.

I know the countries where the white moons burn,  
And heavy star on star  
Dips on the pale and crystal desert hills.  
I know the river of the sun that fills  
With founts of gold the lakes of Orient sky.

. . . . .

And I have heard a voice of broken seas  
And from the cliffs a cry.  
Ah still they learn, those cave-eared Cyclades,  
The Triton's friendly or his fearful horn,  
And why the deep sea-bells but seldom chime,  
And how those waves and with what spell-swept rhyme  
In years of morning, on a summer's morn  
Whispering round his castle on the coast,  
Lured young Achilles from his haunted sleep  
And drave him out to dive beyond those deep  
Dim purple windows of the empty swell,  
His ivory body flitting like a ghost  
Over the holes where flat blind fishes dwell,  
All to embrace his mother thronèd in her shell.

SANTORIN  
(*A Legend of the Aegean*)

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

'Who are you, Sea Lady,  
And where in the seas are we?  
I have too long been steering  
By the flashes in your eyes.  
Why drops the moonlight through my heart,  
And why so quietly  
Go the great engines of my boat  
As if their souls were free?'  
'Oh ask me not, bold sailor;  
Is not your ship a magic ship  
That sails without a sail:  
Are not these isles the Isles of Greece  
And dust upon the sea?  
But answer me three questions  
And give me answers three.  
What is your ship?' 'A British.'  
'And where may Britain be?'  
'Oh it lies north, dear lady;  
It is a small country.'  
'Yet you will know my lover,  
Though you live far away:  
And you will whisper where he has gone,  
That lily boy to look upon  
And whiter than the spray.'  
'How should I know your lover,  
Lady of the sea?'  
'Alexander, Alexander,  
The King of the World was he.'  
'Weep not for him, dear lady,  
But come aboard my ship.  
So many years ago he died,  
He's dead as dead can be.'

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

' O base and brutal sailor  
To lie this lie to me.  
His mother was the foam-foot  
Star-sparkling Aphrodite;  
His father was Adonis  
Who lives away in Lebanon,  
In stony Lebanon, where blooms  
His red anemone.  
But where is Alexander,  
The soldier Alexander,  
My golden love of olden days  
The King of the world and me ? '

She sank into the moonlight  
And the sea was only sea.

YASMIN  
*A Ghazel*

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

How splendid in the morning glows the lily: with  
what grace he throws  
His supplication to the rose: do roses nod the head,  
Yasmin?

But when the silver dove descends I find the little  
flower of friends  
Whose very name that sweetly ends I say when I  
have said, Yasmin.

The morning light is clear and cold: I dare not in  
that light behold  
A whiter light, a deeper gold, a glory too far shed,  
Yasmin.

But when the deep red eye of day is level with the  
lone highway,  
And some to Meccah turn to pray, and I toward thy  
bed, Yasmin;

Or when the wind beneath the moon is drifting like  
a soul aswoon,  
And harping planets talk love's tune with milky  
wings outspread, Yasmin,

Shower down thy love, O burning bright! For one  
night or the other night  
Will come the Gardener in white, and gathered  
flowers are dead, Yasmin.

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

## GATES OF DAMASCUS

Four great gates has the city of Damascus,  
And four Grand Wardens, on their spears re-  
clining,  
All day long stand like tall stone men  
And sleep on the towers when the moon is  
shining.

*This is the song of the East Gate Warden  
When he locks the great gate and smokes in his  
garden.*

Postern of Fate, the Desert Gate, Disaster's Cavern,  
Fort of Fear,  
The Portal of Bagdad am I, the Doorway of Diar-  
bekir.

The Persian dawn with new desires may net the  
flushing mountain spires,  
But my gaunt buttress still rejects the suppliance of  
those mellow fires.

Pass not beneath, O Caravan, or pass not singing.  
Have you heard  
That silence where the birds are dead yet something  
pipeth like a bird?

Pass not beneath! Men say there blows in stony  
deserts still a rose  
But with no scarlet to her leaf—and from whose  
heart no perfume flows.

Wilt thou bloom red where she buds pale, thy sister  
rose? Wilt thou not fail  
When noonday flashes like a flail? Leave, nightin-  
gale, the Caravan!



Pass then, pass all! Bagdad! ye cry, and down the  
billows of blue sky  
Ye beat the bell that beats to hell, and who shall  
thrust ye back? Not I.

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

The Sun who flashes through the head and paints  
the shadows green and red—  
The Sun shall eat thy fleshless dead, O Caravan, O  
Caravan!

And one who licks his lips for thirst with fevered  
eyes shall face in fear  
The palms that wave, the streams that burst, his  
last mirage, O Caravan!

And one—the bird-voiced Singing-man—shall fall  
behind thee, Caravan!  
And God shall meet him in the night, and he shall  
sing as best he can.

And one the Bedouin shall slay, and one, sand-  
stricken on the way,  
Go dark and blind; and one shall say—‘ How lonely  
is the Caravan!’

Pass out beneath, O Caravan, Doom’s Caravan,  
Death’s Caravan!  
I had not told ye, fools, so much, save that I heard  
your Singing-man.

*This was sung by the West Gate’s keeper  
When heaven’s hollow dome grew deeper.*

I am the gate toward the sea: O sailor men, pass out  
from me!  
I hear you high on Lebanon, singing the marvels of  
the sea.

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

The dragon-green, the luminous, the dark, the serpent-haunted sea,  
The snow-besprinkled wine of earth, the white-and-blue-flower foaming sea.

Beyond the sea are towns with towers, carved with lions and lily flowers,  
And not a soul in all those lonely streets to while away the hours.

Beyond the towns, an isle where, bound, a naked giant bites the ground:  
The shadow of a monstrous wing looms on his back: and still no sound.

Beyond the isle a rock that screams like madmen shouting in their dreams,  
From whose dark issues night and day blood crashes in a thousand streams.

Beyond the rock is Restful Bay, where no wind breathes or ripple stirs,  
And there on Roman ships, they say, stand rows of metal mariners.

Beyond the bay in utmost West old Solomon the Jewish King  
Sits with his beard upon his breast, and grips and guards his magic ring:

And when that ring is stolen, he will rise in outraged majesty,  
And take the World upon his back, and fling the World beyond the sea.

*This is the song of the North Gate's master,  
Who singeth fast, but drinketh faster.*

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

I am the gay Aleppo Gate: a dawn, a dawn and thou  
art there:

Eat not thy heart with fear and care, O brother of  
the beast we hate!

Thou hast not many miles to tread, nor other foes  
than fleas to dread;

Homs shall behold thy morning meal, and Hama see  
thee safe in bed.

Take to Aleppo filigrane, and take them paste of  
apricots,

And coffee tables botched with pearl, and little  
beaten brassware pots:

And thou shalt sell thy wares for thrice the Damas-  
cene retailers' price,

And buy a fat Armenian slave who smelleth odorous  
and nice.

Some men of noble stock were made: some glory in  
the murder-blade:

Some praise a Science or an Art, but I like honour-  
able Trade!

Sell them the rotten, buy the ripe! Their heads are  
weak; their pockets burn.

Aleppo men are mighty fools. Salaam Aleikum! Safe  
return!

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

*This is the song of the South Gate Holder,  
A silver man, but his song is older.*

I am the Gate that fears no fall: the Mihrab of  
Damascus wall,  
The bridge of booming Sinai: the Arch of Allah all in  
all.

O spiritual pilgrim, rise: the night has grown her  
single horn:  
The voices of the souls unborn are half adream with  
Paradise.

To Meccah thou hast turned in prayer with aching  
heart and eyes that burn:  
Ah, Hajji, whither wilt thou turn when thou art  
there, when thou art there?

God be thy guide from camp to camp: God be thy  
shade from well to well;  
God grant beneath the desert stars thou hear the  
Prophet's camel bell.

And God shall make thy body pure, and give thee  
knowledge to endure  
This ghost-life's piercing phantom-pain, and bring  
thee out to Life again.

And God shall make thy soul a Glass where eighteen  
thousand Aeons pass,  
And thou shalt see the gleaming Worlds as men see  
dew upon the grass.

And son of Islam, it may be that thou shalt learn at  
journey's end  
Who walks thy garden eve on eve, and bows his head,  
and calls thee Friend.

## THE DYING PATRIOT

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

Day breaks on England down the Kentish hills,  
Singing in the silence of the meadow-footing rills,  
Day of my dreams, O day!

I saw them march from Dover, long ago,  
With a silver cross before them, singing low,  
Monks of Rome from their home where the blue seas  
break in foam,  
Augustine with his feet of snow.

Noon strikes on England, noon on Oxford town,  
—Beauty she was statue cold—there's blood upon  
her gown:

Noon of my dreams, O noon!  
Proud and godly kings had built her, long ago,  
With her towers and tombs and statues all arow,  
With her fair and floral air and the love that lingers  
there,  
And the streets where the great men go.

Evening on the olden, the golden sea of Wales,  
When the first star shivers and the last wave pales:  
O evening dreams!

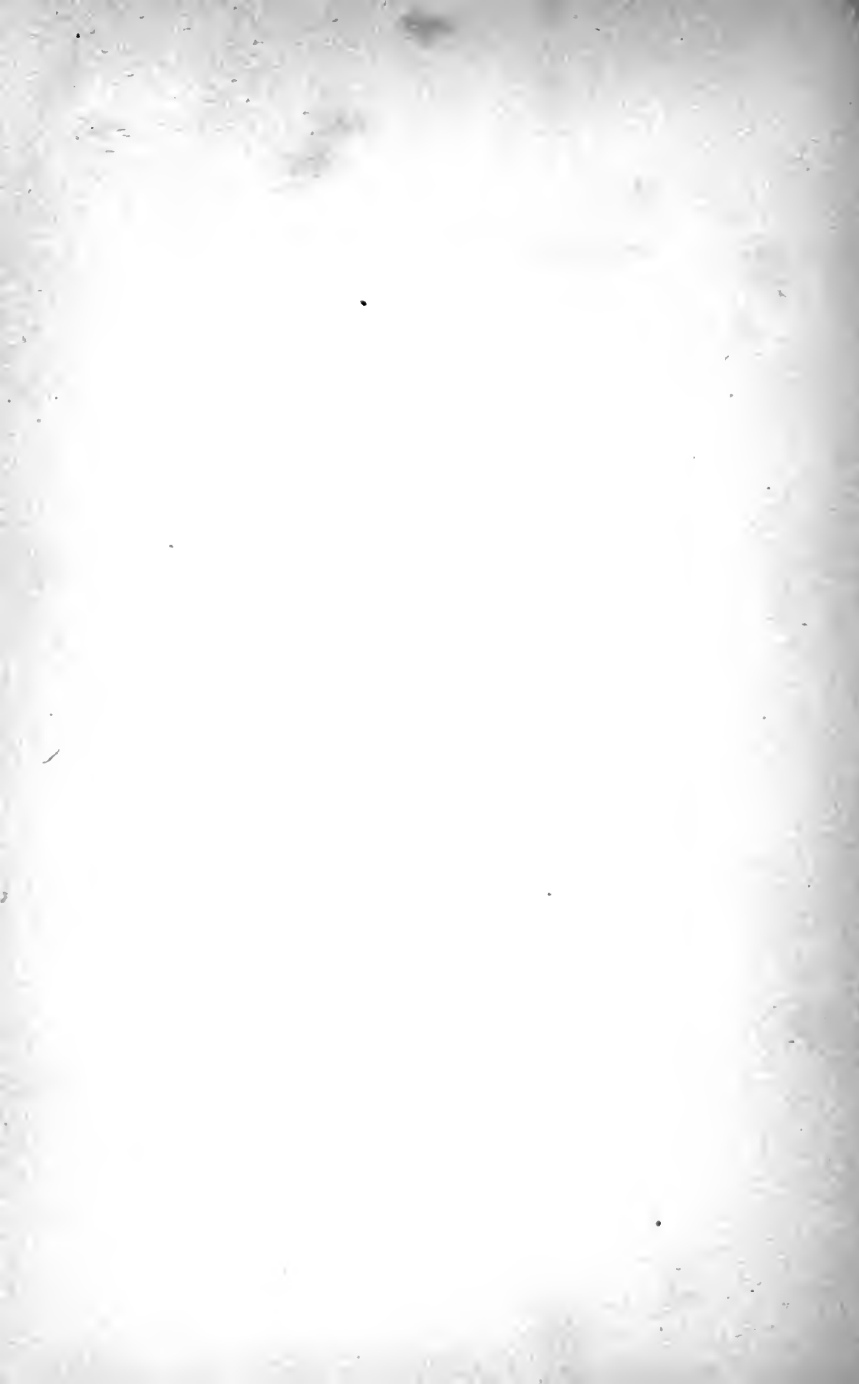
There's a house that Britons walked in, long ago,  
Where now the springs of ocean fall and flow,  
And the dead robed in red and sea-lilies overhead  
Sway when the long winds blow.

Sleep not, my country: though night is here, afar  
Your children of the morning are clamorous for war:  
Fire in the night, O dreams!

James  
Elroy  
Flecker

Though she send you as she sent you, long ago,  
South to desert, east to ocean, west to snow,  
West of these out to seas colder than the Hebrides  
I must go  
Where the fleet of stars is anchored, and the young  
Star-captains glow.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON





## THE GORSE

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

In dream, again within the clean, cold hell  
Of glazed and aching silence he was trapped;  
And, closing in, the blank walls of his cell  
Crushed stifling on him . . . when the bracken  
snapped,  
Caught in his clutching fingers; and he lay  
Awake upon his back among the fern,  
With free eyes travelling the wide blue day,  
Unhindered, unremembering; while a burn  
Tinkled and gurgled somewhere out of sight,  
Unheard of him; till suddenly aware  
Of its cold music, shivering in the light,  
He raised himself, and with far-ranging stare  
Looked all about him: and with dazed eyes wide  
Saw, still as in a numb, unreal dream,  
Black figures scouring a far hill-side,  
With now and then a sunlit rifle's gleam;  
And knew the hunt was hot upon his track:  
Yet hardly seemed to mind, somehow, just then . . .  
But kept on wondering why they looked so black  
On that hot hillside, all those little men  
Who scurried round like beetles—twelve, all told . . .  
He counted them twice over; and began  
A third time reckoning them, but could not hold  
His starved wits to the business, while they ran  
So brokenly, and always stuck at 'five' . . .  
And 'One, two, three, four, five,' a dozen times  
He muttered. . . . 'Can you catch a fish alive?'  
Sang mocking echoes of old nursery rhymes  
Through the strained, tingling hollow of his head.  
And now, almost remembering, he was stirred  
To pity them; and wondered if they'd fed  
Since he had, or if, ever since they'd heard

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

Two nights ago the sudden signal-gun  
That raised alarm of his escape, they too  
Had fasted in the wilderness, and run  
With nothing but the thirsty wind to chew,  
And nothing in their bellies but a fill  
Of cold peat-water, till their heads were light. . . .

The crackling of a rifle on the hill  
Rang in his ears: and stung to headlong flight,  
He started to his feet; and through the brake  
He plunged in panic, heedless of the sun  
That burned his cropped head to a red-hot ache  
Still racked with crackling echoes of the gun.

Then suddenly the sun-enkindled fire  
Of gorse upon the moor-top caught his eye:  
And that gold glow held all his heart's desire,  
As, like a witless, flame-bewildered fly,  
He blundered towards the league-wide yellow blaze,  
And tumbled headlong on the spikes of bloom;  
And rising, bruised and bleeding and adaze,  
Struggled through clutching spines; the dense,  
sweet fume  
Of nutty, acrid scent like poison stealing  
Through his hot blood; the bristling yellow glare  
Spiking his eyes with fire, till he went reeling,  
Stifled and blinded, on—and did not care  
Though he were taken—wandering round and round,  
'Jerusalem the Golden' quavering shrill,  
Changing his tune to 'Tommy Tiddler's Ground':  
Till, just a lost child on that dazzling hill,  
Bewildered in a glittering golden maze  
Of stinging scented fire, he dropped, quite done,  
A shrivelling wisp within a world ablaze  
Beneath a blinding sky, one blaze of sun.

*Scene: The big tent-stable of a travelling circus. On the ground near the entrance GENTLEMAN JOHN, stableman and general odd-job man, lies smoking beside MERRY ANDREW, the clown. GENTLEMAN JOHN is a little hunched man with a sensitive face and dreamy eyes. MERRY ANDREW, who is resting between the afternoon and evening performances, with his clown's hat lying beside him, wears a crimson wig, and a baggy suit of orange-coloured cotton, patterned with purple cats. His face is chalked dead-white, and painted with a set grin, so that it is impossible to see what manner of man he is. In the background are camels and elephants feeding, dimly visible in the steamy dusk of the tent.*

*Gentleman John*

And then consider camels: only think  
Of camels long enough, and you'd go mad—  
With all their humps and lumps; their knobbly  
knees,  
Splay feet, and straddle legs; their sagging necks,  
Flat flanks, and scraggy tails, and monstrous teeth.  
I've not forgotten the first fiend I met:  
'Twas in a lane in Smyrna, just a ditch  
Between the shuttered houses, and so narrow  
The brute's bulk blocked the road; the huge green  
stack  
Of dewy fodder that it slouched beneath  
Brushing the yellow walls on either hand,  
And shutting out the strip of burning blue:  
And I'd to face that vicious bobbing head  
With evil eyes, slack lips, and nightmare teeth,

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

And duck beneath the snaky, squirming neck,  
Pranked with its silly string of bright blue beads,  
That seemed to wriggle every way at once,  
As though it were a hydra. Allah's beard!  
But I was scared, and nearly turned and ran:  
I felt that muzzle take me by the scruff,  
And heard those murderous teeth crunching my  
spine,  
Before I stooped—though I dodged safely under.  
I've always been afraid of ugliness.  
I'm such a toad myself, I hate all toads;  
And the camel is the ugliest toad of all,  
To my mind; and it's just my devil's luck  
I've come to this—to be a camel's lackey,  
To fetch and carry for original sin,  
For sure enough, the camel's old evil incarnate.  
Blue beads and amulets to ward off evil!  
No eye's more evil than a camel's eye.  
The elephant is quite a comely brute,  
Compared with Satan camel,—trunk and all,  
His floppy ears, and his inconsequent tail.  
He's stolid, but at least a gentleman.  
It doesn't hurt my pride to valet him,  
And bring his shaving-water. He's a lord.  
Only the bluest blood that has come down  
Through generations from the mastodon  
Could carry off that tail with dignity,  
That tail and trunk. He cannot look absurd,  
For all the monkey tricks you put him through,  
Your paper hoops and popguns. He just makes  
His masters look ridiculous, when his pomp's  
Butchered to make a bumpkin's holiday.  
He's dignity itself, and proper pride,  
That stands serenely in a circus-world  
Of mountebanks and monkeys. He has weight

Behind him : aeons of primeval power                      Wilfrid  
Have shaped that pillared bulk ; and hestandssure,      Wilson  
Solid, substantial on the world's foundations.              Gibson

And he has form, form that's too big a thing  
To be called beauty. Once, long since, I thought  
To be a poet, and shape words, and mould  
A poem like an elephant, huge, sublime,  
To front oblivion ; and because I failed,  
And all my rhymes were gawky, shambling camels,  
Or else obscene, blue-buttocked apes, I'm doomed  
To lackey it for things such as I've made,  
Till one of them crunches my backbone with his  
teeth,

Or knocks my wind out with a forthright kick  
Clean in the midriff, crumpling up in death  
The hunched and stunted body that was me—  
John, the apostle of the Perfect Form !  
Jerusalem ! I'm talking like a book—  
As you would say : and a bad book at that,  
A maundering, kiss-mammy book—The Hunch-  
back's End  
Or The Camel-Keeper's Reward—would be its  
title.

I froth and bubble like a new-broached cask.  
No wonder you look glum, for all your grin.  
What makes you mope ? You've naught to growse  
about.

You've got no hump. Your body's brave and  
straight—

So shapely even that you can afford  
To trick it in fantastic shapelessness,  
Knowing that there's a clean-limbed man beneath  
Preposterous pantaloons and purple cats.  
I would have been a poet, if I could :  
But better than shaping poems 'twould have been

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

To have had a comely body and clean limbs  
Obedient to my bidding.

*Merry Andrew*  
This afternoon.

I missed a hoop

*Gentleman John* You missed a hoop? You mean . . .

*Merry Andrew*

That I am done, used up, scrapped, on the shelf,  
Out of the running—only that, no more.

*Gentleman John*

Well, I've been missing hoops my whole life long;  
Though, when I come to think of it, perhaps  
There's little consolation to be chewed  
From crumbs that I can offer.

*Merry Andrew*

I've not missed

A hoop since I was six. I'm forty-two.  
This is the first time that my body's failed me:  
But 'twill not be the last. And . . .

*Gentleman John*

Such is life!

You're going to say. You see I've got it pat,  
Your jaded wheeze. Lord, what a wit I'd make  
If I'd a set grin painted on my face.  
And such is life, I'd say a hundred times,  
And each time set the world roar afresh  
At my original humour. Missed a hoop!  
Why, man alive, you've naught to grumble at.  
I've boggled every hoop since I was six.  
I'm fifty-five; and I've run round a ring  
Would make this potty circus seem a pinhole.  
I wasn't born to sawdust. I'd the world  
For circus . . .

*Merry Andrew* It's no time for crowing now.  
I know a gentleman, and take on trust  
The silver spoon and all. My teeth were cut  
Upon a horseshoe: and I wasn't born  
To purple and fine linen—but to sawdust,  
To sawdust, as you say—brought up on sawdust.  
I've had to make my daily bread of sawdust:  
Ay, and my children's,—children's, that's the rub,  
As Shakespeare says . . .

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

*Gentleman John* Ah, there you go again!  
What a rare wit to set the ring aroar—  
As Shakespeare says! Crowing? A gentleman?  
Man, didn't you say you'd never missed a hoop?  
It's only gentlemen who miss no hoops,  
Clean livers, easy lords of life who take  
Each obstacle at a leap, who never fail.  
You are the gentleman.

*Merry Andrew* Now don't you try  
Being funny at my expense; or you'll soon find  
I'm not quite done for yet—not quite snuffed out.  
There's still a spark of life. You may have words:  
But I've a fist will be a match for them.  
Words slaver feebly from a broken jaw.  
I've always lived straight, as a man must do  
In my profession, if he'd keep in fettle:  
But I'm no gentleman, for I fail to see  
There's any sport in baiting a poor man  
Because he's losing grip at forty-two,  
And sees his livelihood slipping from his grasp—  
Ay, and his children's bread.

*Gentleman John* Why, man alive,  
Who's baiting you? This winded, broken cur,

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

That limps through life, to bait a bull like you!  
You don't want pity, man! The beaten bull,  
Even when the dogs are tearing at his gullet,  
Turns no eye up for pity. I myself,  
Crippled and hunched and twisted as I am,  
Would make a brave fend to stand up to you  
Until you swallowed your words, if you should  
slobber  
Your pity over me. A bull! Nay, man,  
You're nothing but a bear with a sore head.  
A bee has stung you—you who've lived on honey.  
Sawdust, forsooth! You've had the sweet of life:  
You've munched the honeycomb till . . .

*Merry Andrew* Ay! talk's cheap.  
But you've no children. You don't understand.

*Gentleman John*  
I have no children: I don't understand!

*Merry Andrew*  
It's children make the difference.

*Gentleman John* Man alive—  
Alive and kicking, though you're shamming  
dead—  
You've hit the truth at last. It's that, just that,  
Makes all the difference. If you hadn't children,  
I'd find it in my heart to pity you,  
Granted you'd let me. I don't understand!  
I've seen you stripped. I've seen your children  
stripped.  
You've never seen me naked; but you can guess  
The misstitched, gnarled, and crooked thing I am.  
Now, do you understand? I may have words.



But you, man, do you never burn with pride  
That you've begotten those six limber bodies,  
Firm flesh, and supple sinew, and lithe limb—  
Six nimble lads, each like young Absalom,  
With red blood running lively in his veins,  
Bone of your bone, your very flesh and blood?  
It's you don't understand. God, what I'd give  
This moment to be you, just as you are,  
Preposterous pantaloons, and purple cats,  
And painted leer, and crimson curls, and all—  
To be you now, with only one missed hoop,  
If I'd six clean-limbed children of my loins,  
Born of the ecstasy of life within me,  
To keep it quick and valiant in the ring  
When I . . . but I . . . Man, man, you've missed a  
hoop;

But they'll take every hoop like blooded colts:  
And 'twill be you in them that leaps through life,  
And in their children, and their children's children.  
God! doesn't it make you hold your breath to think  
There'll always be an Andrew in the ring,  
The very spit and image of you stripped,  
While life's old circus lasts? And I . . . at least  
There is no twisted thing of my begetting  
To keep my shame alive: and that's the most  
That I've to pride myself upon. But, God,  
I'm proud, ay, proud as Lucifer, of that.  
Think what it means, with all the urge and sting,  
When such a lust of life runs in the veins.  
You, with your six sons, and your one missed hoop,  
Put that thought in your pipe and smoke it. Well,  
And how d'you like the flavour? Something bitter?  
And burns the tongue a trifle? That's the brand  
That I must smoke while I've the breath to puff.

*(Pause.)*

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

I've always worshipped the body, all my life—  
The body, quick with the perfect health which is  
    beauty,  
Lively, lissom, alert, and taking its way  
Through the world with the easy gait of the early  
    gods.  
The only moments I've lived my life to the full  
And that live again in remembrance unfaded are  
    those  
When I've seen life compact in some perfect body,  
The living God made manifest in man:  
A diver in the Mediterranean, resting,  
With sleeked black hair, and glistening salt-tanned  
    skin,  
Gripping the quivering gunwale with tense  
    hands,  
His torso lifted out of the peacock sea,  
Like Neptune, carved in amber, come to life:  
A stark Egyptian on the Nile's edge poised  
Like a bronze Osiris against the lush, rank green:  
A fisherman dancing reels, on New Year's Eve,  
In a hall of shadowy rafters and flickering lights,  
At St Abbs on the Berwickshire coast, to the skirl  
    of the pipes,  
The lift of the wave in his heels, the sea in his  
    veins:  
A Cherokee Indian, as though he were one with  
    his horse,  
His coppery shoulders agleam, his feathers aflame  
With the last of the sun, descending a gulch in  
    Alaska;  
A brawny Cleveland puddler, stripped to the  
    loins,  
On the cauldron's brink, stirring the molten iron  
In the white-hot glow, a man of white-hot metal:

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

**Wilson  
Gibson**

**Gibson**

**Gibson**

Jack's the boy!

Jack's the boy!

man.

d scant of breath.

## But what are words

## But what are words

the Greeks did best

bronze

ember

saw in Athens,

of the deep

and years or more,

Roman pirates,

s plunderers

s as they sank—

beauty,

and rise again,

all men's worship,

e, the youth of the

ze for everlasting.

n have forgotten now.

y walking

body's pride.

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

For in the circus-ring there's more delight  
Of seemly bodies, goodly in sheer health,  
Bodies trained and tuned to the perfect pitch,  
Eager, blithe, debonair, from head to heel  
Aglow and alive in every pulse, than elsewhere  
In this machine-ridden land of grimy, glum  
Round-shouldered, coughing mechanics. Once I  
lived

In London, in a slum called Paradise,  
Sickened to see the greasy pavements crawling  
With puny flabby babies, thick as maggots.  
Poor brats! I'd soon go mad if I'd to live  
In London, with its stunted men and women  
But little better to look on than myself.

Yet, there's an island where the men keep fit—  
St Kilda's, a stark fastness of high crag:  
They must keep fit or famish: their main food  
The Solan goose; and it's a chancy job  
To swing down a sheer face of slippery granite  
And drop a noose over the sentinel bird  
Ere he can squawk to rouse the sleeping flock.  
They must keep fit—their bodies taut and trim—  
To have the nerve: and they're like tempered steel,  
Suppled and fined. But even they've grown slacker  
Through traffic with the mainland, in these days.  
A hundred years ago, the custom held  
That none should take a wife till he had stood,  
His left heel on the dizziest point of crag,  
His right leg and both arms stretched in mid air,  
Above the sea: three hundred feet to drop  
To death, if he should fail—a Spartan test.  
But any man who could have failed, would scarce  
Have earned his livelihood or his children's bread,  
On that bleak rock.

*Merry Andrew (drowsily)*

Ay, children—that's it, children!

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

*Gentleman John*

St Kilda's children had a chance, at least,  
With none begotten idly of weakling fathers.  
A Spartan test for fatherhood! Should they miss  
Their hoop, 'twas death, and childless. You have  
still  
Six lives to take unending hoops for you,  
And you yourself are not done yet. . . .

*Merry Andrew (more drowsily)*

Not yet.

And there's much comfort in the thought of  
children.  
They're bonnie boys enough; and should do well,  
If I can but keep going a little while,  
A little longer till . . .

*Gentleman John*

Six strapping sons!

And I have naught but camels.

(*Pause.*)

Yet, I've seen

A vision in this stable that puts to shame  
Each ecstasy of mortal flesh and blood  
That's been my eyes' delight. I never breathed  
A word of it to man or woman yet:  
I couldn't whisper it now to you, if you looked  
Like any human thing this side of death.  
'Twas on the night I stumbled on the circus.  
I'd wandered all day, lost among the fells,  
Over snow-smothered hills, through blinding  
blizzard,  
Whipped by a wind that seemed to strip and skin  
me,

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

Till I was one numb ache of sodden ice.  
Quite done, and drunk with cold, I'd soon have  
dropped

Dead in a ditch; when suddenly a lantern  
Dazzled my eyes. I smelt a queer warm smell;  
And felt a hot puff in my face; and blundered  
Out of the flurry of snow and raking wind  
Dizzily into a glowing Arabian night  
Of elephants and camels having supper.  
I thought that I'd gone mad, stark, staring mad;  
But I was much too sleepy to mind just then—  
Dropped dead asleep upon a truss of hay;  
And lay, a log, till—well, I cannot tell  
How long I lay unconscious. I but know  
I slept, and wakened, and that 'twas no dream.  
I heard a rustle in the hay beside me,  
And opening sleepy eyes, scarce marvelling,  
I saw her, standing naked in the lamplight,  
Beneath the huge tent's cavernous canopy,  
Against the throng of elephants and camels  
That champed unwondering in the golden dusk,  
Moon-white Diana, mettled Artemis—  
Her body, quick and tense as her own bowstring,  
Her spirit, an arrow barbed and strung for flight—  
White snowflakes melting on her night-black  
hair,  
And on her glistening breasts and supple thighs:  
Her red lips parted, her keen eyes alive  
With fierce, far-ranging hungers of the chase  
Over the hills of morn . . . The lantern guttered  
And I was left alone in the outer darkness  
Among the champing elephants and camels.  
And I'll be a camel-keeper to the end:  
Though never again my eyes . . .

*(Pause.)*

So you can sleep,  
You Merry Andrew, for all you missed your hoop.  
It's just as well, perhaps. Now I can hold  
My secret to the end. Ah, here they come!

Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

*(Six lads, between the ages of three and twelve, clad in  
pink tights covered with silver spangles, tumble  
into the tent.)*

*The Eldest Boy*

Daddy, the bell's rung, and . . .

*Gentleman John*

He's snoozing sound.  
*(to the youngest boy)*

You just creep quietly, and take tight hold  
Of the crimson curls, and tug, and you will hear  
The purple pussies all caterwaul at once.

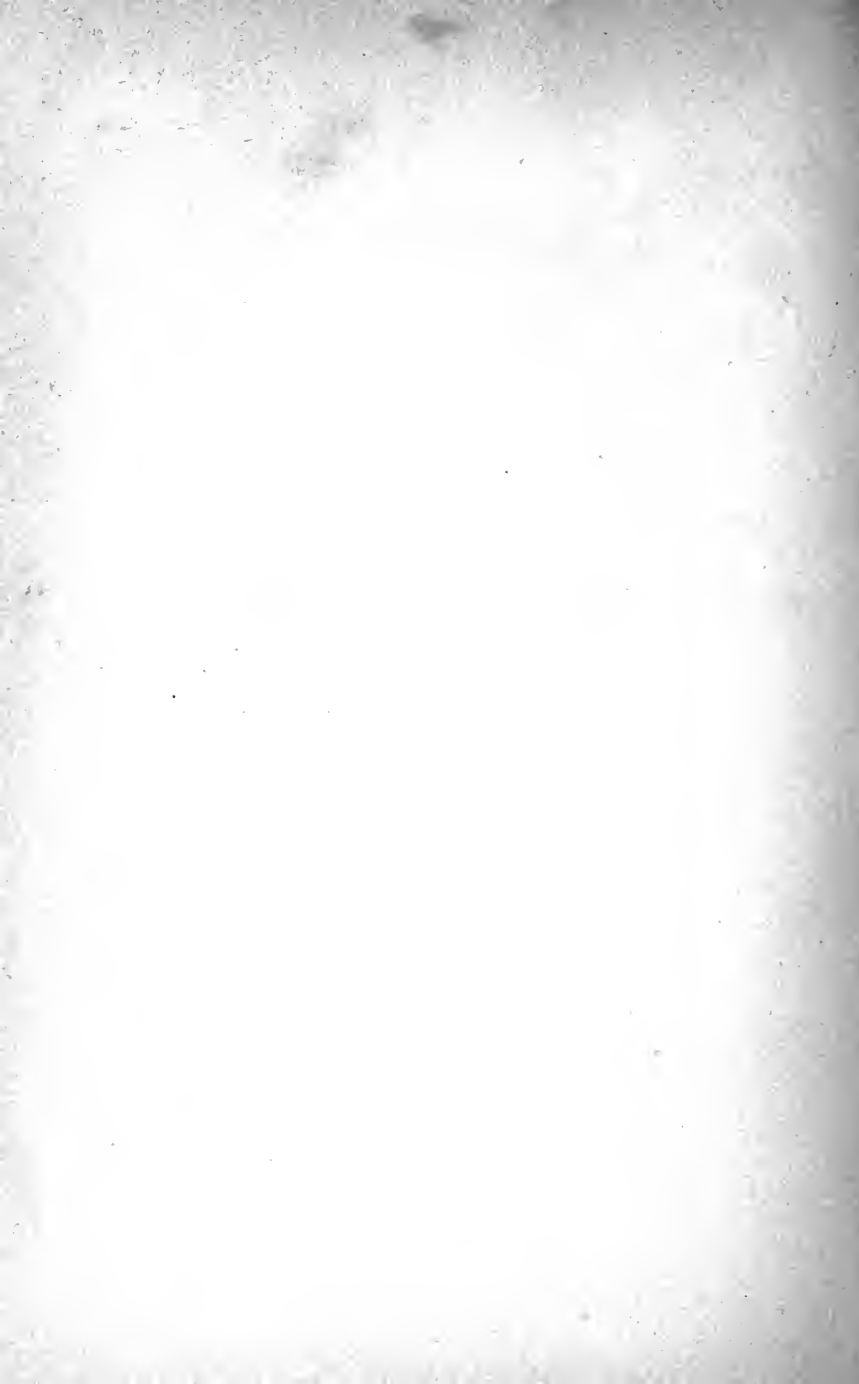
Wilfrid  
Wilson  
Gibson

THE GOING  
*R. B.*

He's gone.  
I do not understand.  
I only know  
That as he turned to go  
And waved his hand,  
In his young eyes a sudden glory shone,  
And I was dazzled with a sunset glow,  
And he was gone.



RALPH HODGSON



## THE BULL

Ralph  
Hodgson

See an old unhappy bull,  
Sick in soul and body both,  
Slouching in the undergrowth  
Of the forest beautiful,  
Banished from the herd he led,  
Bulls and cows a thousand head.

Cranes and gaudy parrots go  
Up and down the burning sky;  
Tree-top cats purr drowsily  
In the dim-day green below;  
And troops of monkeys, nutting, some,  
All disputing, go and come;

And things abominable sit  
Picking offal buck or swine,  
On the mess and over it  
Burnished flies and beetles shine,  
And spiders big as bladders lie  
Under hemlocks ten foot high;

And a dotted serpent curled  
Round and round and round a tree,  
Yellowing its greenery,  
Keeps a watch on all the world,  
All the world and this old bull  
In the forest beautiful.

Bravely by his fall he came:  
One he led, a bull of blood  
Newly come to lustihood,  
Fought and put his prince to shame,  
Snuffed and pawed the prostrate head  
Tameless even while it bled.

Ralph  
Hodgson

There they left him, every one,  
Left him there without a lick,  
Left him for the birds to pick,  
Left him there for carrion,  
Vilely from their bosom cast  
Wisdom, worth and love at last.

When the lion left his lair  
And roared his beauty through the hills,  
And the vultures pecked their quills  
And flew into the middle air,  
Then this prince no more to reign  
Came to life and lived again.

He snuffed the herd in far retreat,  
He saw the blood upon the ground,  
And snuffed the burning airs around  
Still with beevish odours sweet,  
While the blood ran down his head  
And his mouth ran slaver red.

Pity him, this fallen chief,  
All his splendour, all his strength,  
All his body's breadth and length  
Dwindled down with shame and grief,  
Half the bull he was before,  
Bones and leather, nothing more.

See him standing dewlap-deep  
In the rushes at the lake,  
Surly, stupid, half asleep,  
Waiting for his heart to break  
And the birds to join the flies  
Feasting at his bloodshot eyes,—

Standing with his head hung down  
In a stupor, dreaming things:  
Green savannas, jungles brown,  
Battlefields and bellowings,  
Bulls undone and lions dead  
And vultures flapping overhead.

Ralph  
Hodgson

Dreaming things: of days he spent  
With his mother gaunt and lean  
In the valley warm and green,  
Full of baby wonderment,  
Blinking out of silly eyes  
At a hundred mysteries;

Dreaming over once again  
How he wandered with a throng  
Of bulls and cows a thousand strong,  
Wandered on from plain to plain,  
Up the hill and down the dale,  
Always at his mother's tail;

How he lagged behind the herd,  
Lagged and tottered, weak of limb,  
And she turned and ran to him  
Blaring at the loathly bird  
Stationed always in the skies,  
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming maybe of a day  
When her drained and drying paps  
Turned him to the sweets and saps,  
Richer fountains by the way,  
And she left the bull she bore  
And he looked to her no more;

Ralph  
Hodgson

And his little frame grew stout,  
And his little legs grew strong,  
And the way was not so long;  
And his little horns came out,  
And he played at butting trees  
And boulder-stones and tortoises,

Joined a game of knobby skulls  
With the youngsters of his year,  
All the other little bulls,  
Learning both to bruise and bear,  
Learning how to stand a shock  
Like a little bull of rock.

Dreaming of a day less dim,  
Dreaming of a time less far,  
When the faint but certain star  
Of destiny burned clear for him,  
And a fierce and wild unrest  
Broke the quiet of his breast,

And the gristles of his youth  
Hardened in his comely pow,  
And he came to fighting growth,  
Beat his bull and won his cow,  
And flew his tail and trampled off  
Past the tallest, vain enough,

And curved about in splendour full  
And curved again and snuffed the airs  
As who should say Come out who dares!  
And all beheld a bull, a Bull,  
And knew that here was surely one  
That backed for no bull, fearing none.

And the leader of the herd  
Looked and saw, and beat the ground,  
And shook the forest with his sound,  
Bellowed at the loathly bird  
Stationed always in the skies,  
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Ralph  
Hodgson

Dreaming, this old bull forlorn,  
Surely dreaming of the hour  
When he came to sultan power,  
And they owned him master-horn,  
Chiefest bull of all among  
Bulls and cows a thousand strong.

And in all the tramping herd  
Not a bull that barred his way,  
Not a cow that said him nay,  
Not a bull or cow that erred  
In the furnace of his look  
Dared a second, worse rebuke;

Not in all the forest wide,  
Jungle, thicket, pasture, fen,  
Not another dared him then,  
Dared him and again defied;  
Not a sovereign buck or boar  
Came a second time for more.

Not a serpent that survived  
Once the terrors of his hoof  
Risked a second time reproof,  
Came a second time and lived,  
Not a serpent in its skin  
Came again for discipline;

Ralph  
Hodgson

Not a leopard bright as flame,  
Flashing fingerhooks of steel,  
That a wooden tree might feel,  
Met his fury once and came  
For a second reprimand,  
Not a leopard in the land.

Not a lion of them all,  
Not a lion of the hills,  
Hero of a thousand kills,  
Dared a second fight and fall,  
Dared that ram terrific twice,  
Paid a second time the price. . .

Pity him, this dupe of dream,  
Leader of the herd again  
Only in his daft old brain,  
Once again the bull supreme  
And bull enough to bear the part  
Only in his tameless heart.

Pity him that he must wake;  
Even now the swarm of flies  
Blackening his bloodshot eyes  
Bursts and blusters round the lake,  
Scattered from the feast half-fed,  
By great shadows overhead.

And the dreamer turns away  
From his visionary herds  
And his splendid yesterday,  
Turns to meet the loathly birds  
Flocking round him from the skies,  
Waiting for the flesh that dies.



## THE SONG OF HONOUR

Ralph  
Hodgson

I climbed a hill as light fell short,  
And rooks came home in scramble sort,  
And filled the trees and flapped and fought  
And sang themselves to sleep;  
An owl from nowhere with no sound  
Swung by and soon was nowhere found,  
I heard him calling half-way round,  
Holloing loud and deep;  
A pair of stars, faint pins of light,  
Then many a star, sailed into sight,  
And all the stars, the flower of night,  
Were round me at a leap;  
To tell how still the valleys lay  
I heard a watchdog miles away. . . .  
And bells of distant sheep.

I heard no more of bird or bell,  
The mastiff in a slumber fell,  
I stared into the sky,  
As wondering men have always done  
Since beauty and the stars were one,  
Though none so hard as I.

It seemed, so still the valleys were,  
As if the whole world knelt at prayer,  
Save me and me alone;  
So pure and wide that silence was  
I feared to bend a blade of grass,  
And there I stood like stone.

There, sharp and sudden, there I heard—  
*Ah! some wild lovesick singing bird*  
*Woke singing in the trees?*

Ralph  
Hodgson

*The nightingale and babble-wren  
Were in the English greenwood then,  
And you heard one of these ?*

The babble-wren and nightingale  
Sang in the Abyssinian vale  
That season of the year!  
Yet, true enough, I heard them plain,  
I heard them both again, again,  
As sharp and sweet and clear  
As if the Abyssinian tree  
Had thrust a bough across the sea,  
Had thrust a bough across to me  
With music for my ear!

I heard them both, and oh! I heard  
The song of every singing bird  
That sings beneath the sky,  
And with the song of lark and wren  
The song of mountains, moths and men  
And seas and rainbows vie!

I heard the universal choir  
The Sons of Light exalt their Sire  
With universal song,  
Earth's lowliest and loudest notes,  
Her million times ten million throats  
Exalt Him loud and long,  
And lips and lungs and tongues of Grace  
From every part and every place  
Within the shining of His face,  
The universal throng.

I heard the hymn of being sound  
From every well of honour found  
In human sense and soul:

Ralph  
Hodgson

The song of poets when they write  
The testament of Beautysprite  
Upon a flying scroll,  
The song of painters when they take  
A burning brush for Beauty's sake  
And limn her features whole—

The song of men divinely wise  
Who look and see in starry skies  
Not stars so much as robins' eyes,  
And when these pale away  
Hear flocks of shiny pleiades  
Among the plums and apple trees  
Sing in the summer day—  
The song of all both high and low  
To some blest vision true,  
The song of beggars when they throw  
The crust of pity all men owe  
To hungry sparrows in the snow,  
Old beggars hungry too—  
The song of kings of kingdoms when  
They rise above their fortune men,  
And crown themselves anew,—

The song of courage, heart and will  
And gladness in a fight,  
Of men who face a hopeless hill  
With sparking and delight,  
The bells and bells of song that ring  
Round banners of a cause or king  
From armies bleeding white—

The song of sailors every one  
When monstrous tide and tempest run  
At ships like bulls at red,

Ralph  
Hodgson

When stately ships are twirled and spun  
Like whipping tops and help there's none  
And mighty ships ten thousand ton  
Go down like lumps of lead—

And song of fighters stern as they  
At odds with fortune night and day,  
Crammed up in cities grim and grey  
As thick as bees in hives,  
Hosannas of a lowly throng  
Who sing unconscious of their song,  
Whose lips are in their lives—

And song of some at holy war  
With spells and ghouls more dread by far  
Than deadly seas and cities are,  
Or hordes of quarrelling kings—  
The song of fighters great and small,  
The song of pretty fighters all,  
And high heroic things—

The song of lovers—who knows how  
Twitched up from place and time  
Upon a sigh, a blush, a vow,  
A curve or hue of cheek or brow,  
Borne up and off from here and now  
Into the void sublime!

And crying loves and passions still  
In every key from soft to shrill  
And numbers never done,  
Dog-loyalties to faith and friend,  
And loves like Ruth's of old no end,  
And intermission none—

Ralph  
Hodgson

And burst on burst for beauty and  
For numbers not behind,  
From men whose love of motherland  
Is like a dog's for one dear hand,  
Sole, selfless, boundless, blind—  
And song of some with hearts beside  
For men and sorrows far and wide,  
Who watch the world with pity and pride  
And warm to all mankind—

And endless joyous music rise  
From children at their play,  
And endless soaring lullabies  
From happy, happy mothers' eyes,  
And answering crows and baby cries,  
How many who shall say!  
And many a song as wondrous well  
With pangs and sweets intolerable  
From lonely hearths too gray to tell,  
God knows how utter gray!  
And song from many a house of care  
When pain has forced a footing there  
And there's a Darkness on the stair  
Will not be turned away—

And song—that song whose singers come  
With old kind tales of pity from  
The Great Compassion's lips,  
That makes the bells of Heaven to peal  
Round pillows frosty with the feel  
Of Death's cold finger tips—

The song of men all sorts and kinds,  
As many tempers, moods and minds  
As leaves are on a tree,

Ralph  
Hodgson

As many faiths and castes and creeds,  
As many human bloods and breeds  
As in the world may be;

The song of each and all who gaze  
On Beauty in her naked blaze,  
Or see her dimly in a haze,  
Or get her light in fitful rays  
And tiniest needles even,  
The song of all not wholly dark,  
Not wholly sunk in stupor stark  
Too deep for groping Heaven—

And alleluias sweet and clear  
And wild with beauty men mishear,  
From choirs of song as near and dear  
To Paradise as they,  
The everlasting pipe and flute  
Of wind and sea and bird and brute,  
And lips deaf men imagine mute  
In wood and stone and clay;

The music of a lion strong  
That shakes a hill a whole night long,  
A hill as loud as he,  
The twitter of a mouse among  
Melodious greenery,  
The ruby's and the rainbow's song,  
The nightingale's—all three,  
The song of life that wells and flows  
From every leopard, lark and rose  
And everything that gleams or goes  
Lack-lustre in the sea.

I heard it all, each, every note  
Of every lung and tongue and throat,  
Ay, every rhythm and rhyme

Of everything that lives and loves  
And upward, ever upward moves  
From lowly to sublime!  
Earth's multitudinous Sons of Light,  
I heard them lift their lyric might  
With each and every chanting sprite  
That lit the sky that wondrous night  
As far as eye could climb!

Ralph  
Hodgson

I heard it all, I heard the whole  
Harmonious hymn of being roll  
Up through the chapel of my soul  
And at the altar die,  
And in the awful quiet then  
Myself I heard, Amen, Amen,  
Amen I heard me cry!  
I heard it all, and then although  
I caught my flying senses, oh,  
A dizzy man was I!  
I stood and stared; the sky was lit,  
The sky was stars all over it,  
I stood, I knew not why,  
Without a wish, without a will,  
I stood upon that silent hill  
And stared into the sky until  
My eyes were blind with stars and still  
I stared into the sky.





D. H. LAWRENCE



## SERVICE OF ALL THE DEAD

D. H.  
Lawrence

Between the avenues of cypresses,  
All in their scarlet cloaks, and surplices  
Of linen, go the chaunting choristers,  
The priests in gold and black, the villagers.

And all along the path to the cemetery  
The round, dark heads of men crowd silently,  
And black-scarved faces of women-folk, wistfully  
Watch at the banner of death, and the mystery.

And at the foot of a grave a father stands  
With sunken head, and forgotten, folded hands;  
And at the foot of a grave a woman kneels  
With pale shut face, and neither hears nor feels

The coming of the chaunting choristers  
Between the avenues of cypresses,  
The silence of the many villagers,  
The candle-flames beside the surplices.

D. H.  
Lawrence

## MEETING AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

The little pansies by the road have turned  
Away their purple faces and their gold,  
And evening has taken all the bees from the thyme,  
And all the scent is shed away by the cold.

Against the hard and pale blue evening sky  
The mountain's new-dropped summer snow is clear  
Glistening in steadfast stillness: like transcendent  
Clean pain sending on us a chill down here.

Christ on the Cross!—his beautiful young man's body  
Has fallen dead upon the nails, and hangs  
White and loose at last, with all the pain  
Drawn on his mouth, eyes broken at last by his pangs.

And slowly down the mountain road, belated,  
A bullock wagon comes; so I am ashamed  
To gaze any more at the Christ, whom the mountain  
    snows  
Whitely confront; I wait on the grass, am lamed.

The breath of the bullock stains the hard, chill air,  
The band is across its brow, and it scarcely seems  
To draw the load, so still and slow it moves,  
While the driver on the shaft sits crouched in dreams.

Surely about his sunburnt face is something  
That vexes me with wonder. He sits so still  
Here among all this silence, crouching forward,  
Dreaming and letting the bullock take its will.

I stand aside on the grass to let them go;  
—And Christ, I have met his accusing eyes again,

The brown eyes black with misery and hate, that look  
Full in my own, and the torment starts again.

D. H.  
Lawrence

One moment the hate leaps at me standing there,  
One moment I see the stillness of agony,  
Something frozen in the silence that dare not be  
Loosed, one moment the darkness frightens me.

Then among the averted pansies, beneath the high  
White peaks of snow, at the foot of the sunken Christ  
I stand in a chill of anguish, trying to say  
The joy I bought was not too highly priced.

But he has gone, motionless, hating me,  
Living as the mountains do, because they are strong,  
With a pale, dead Christ on the crucifix of his heart,  
And breathing the frozen memory of his wrong.

Still in his nostrils the frozen breath of despair,  
And heart like a cross that bears dead agony  
Of naked love, clenched in his fists the shame,  
And in his belly the smouldering hate of me.

And I, as I stand in the cold, averted flowers,  
Feel the shame-wounds in his hands pierce through  
my own,  
And breathe despair that turns my lungs to stone  
And know the dead Christ weighing on my bone.

D. H.  
Lawrence

## CRUELTY AND LOVE

What large, dark hands are those at the window  
Lifted, grasping in the yellow light  
Which makes its way through the curtain web  
At my heart to-night?

Ah, only the leaves! So leave me at rest,  
In the west I see a redness come  
Over the evening's burning breast—  
For now the pain is numb.

The woodbine creeps abroad  
Calling low to her lover:  
The sunlit flirt who all the day  
Has poised above her lips in play  
And stolen kisses, shallow and gay  
Of dalliance, now has gone away  
—She woos the moth with her sweet, low word,  
And when above her his broad wings hover  
Then her bright breast she will uncover  
And yield her honey-drop to her lover.

Into the yellow, evening glow  
Saunters a man from the farm below,  
Leans, and looks in at the low-built shed  
Where hangs the swallow's marriage bed.  
The bird lies warm against the wall.  
She glances quick her startled eyes  
Towards him, then she turns away  
Her small head, making warm display  
Of red upon the throat. Her terrors sway  
Her out of the nest's warm, busy ball,

Whose plaintive cries start up as she flies  
In one blue stoop from out the sties  
Into the evening's empty hall.

D. H.  
Lawrence

Oh, water-hen, beside the rushes  
Hide your quaint, unfading blushes,  
Still your quick tail, and lie as dead,  
Till the distance covers his dangerous tread.

The rabbit presses back her ears,  
Turns back her liquid, anguished eyes  
And crouches low: then with wild spring  
Spurts from the terror of the oncoming  
To be choked back, the wire ring  
Her frantic effort throttling:  
Piteous brown ball of quivering fears!

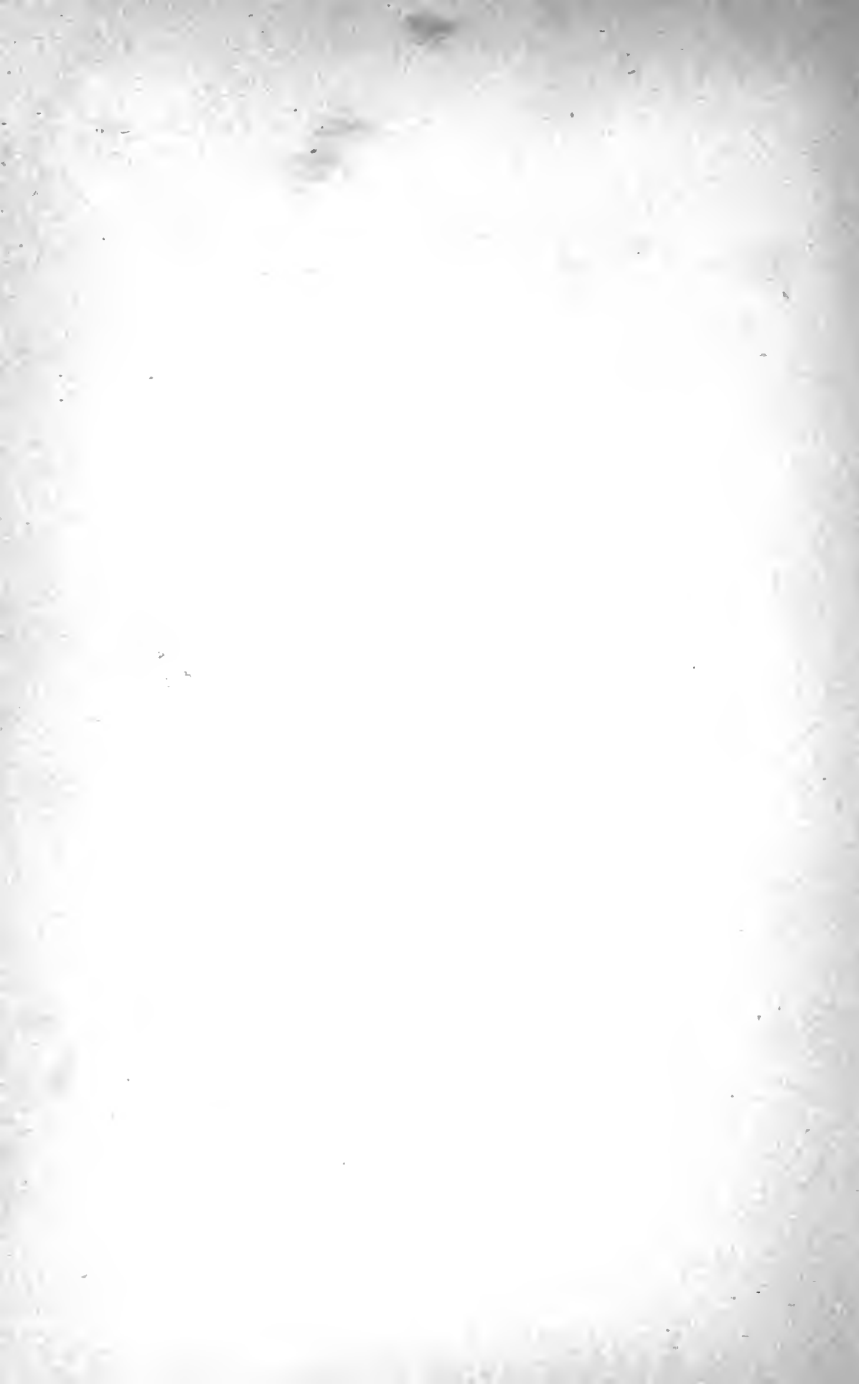
Ah soon in his large, hard hands she dies,  
And swings all loose to the swing of his walk.  
Yet calm and kindly are his eyes  
And ready to open in brown surprise  
Should I not answer to his talk  
Or should he my tears surmise.

I hear his hand on the latch, and rise from my chair  
Watching the door open: he flashes bare  
His strong teeth in a smile, and flashes his eyes  
In a smile like triumph upon me; then careless-wise  
He flings the rabbit soft on the table board  
And comes towards me: ah, the uplifted sword  
Of his hand against my bosom, and oh, the broad  
Blade of his hand that raises my face to applaud  
His coming: he raises up my face to him  
And caresses my mouth with his fingers, smelling grim

D. H.            Of the rabbit's fur! God, I am caught in a snare!  
Lawrence       I know not what fine wire is round my throat,  
                     I only know I let him finger there  
                     My pulse of life, letting him nose like a stoat  
                     Who sniffs with joy before he drinks the blood:  
                     And down his mouth comes to my mouth, and down  
                     His dark bright eyes descend like a fiery hood  
                     Upon my mind: his mouth meets mine, and a flood  
                     Of sweet fire sweeps across me, so I drown  
                     Within him, die, and find death good.



FRANCIS LEDWIDGE



## THE WIFE OF LLEW

Francis  
Ledwidge

And Gwydion said to Math, when it was Spring:  
"Come now and let us make a wife for Llew."  
And so they broke broad boughs yet moist with dew,  
And in a shadow made a magic ring:  
They took the violet and the meadow-sweet  
To form her pretty face, and for her feet  
They built a mound of daisies on a wing,  
And for her voice they made a linnet sing  
In the wide poppy blowing for her mouth.  
And over all they chanted twenty hours.  
And Llew came singing from the azure south  
And bore away his wife of birds and flowers.

Francis  
Ledwidge

## A RAINY DAY IN APRIL

When the clouds shake their hyssops, and the rain  
Like holy water falls upon the plain,  
'Tis sweet to gaze upon the springing grain  
And see your harvest born.

And sweet the little breeze of melody  
The blackbird puffs upon the budding tree,  
While the wild poppy lights upon the lea  
And blazes 'mid the corn.

The skylark soars the freshening shower to hail,  
And the meek daisy holds aloft her pail,  
And Spring all radiant by the wayside pale  
Sets up her rock and reel.

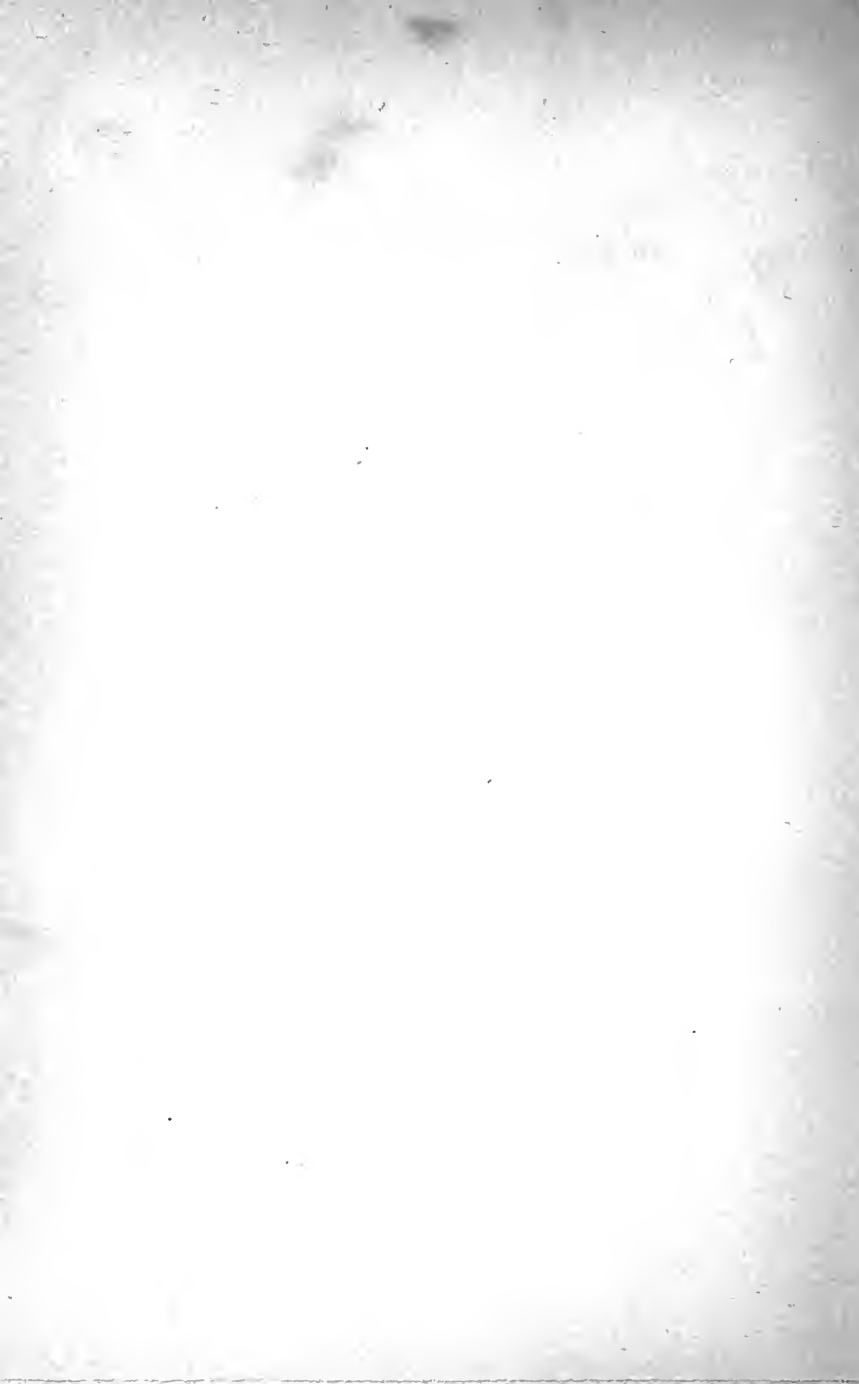
See how she weaves her mantle fold on fold,  
Hemming the woods and carpeting the wold.  
Her warp is of the green, her woof the gold,  
The spinning world her wheel.

## THE LOST ONES

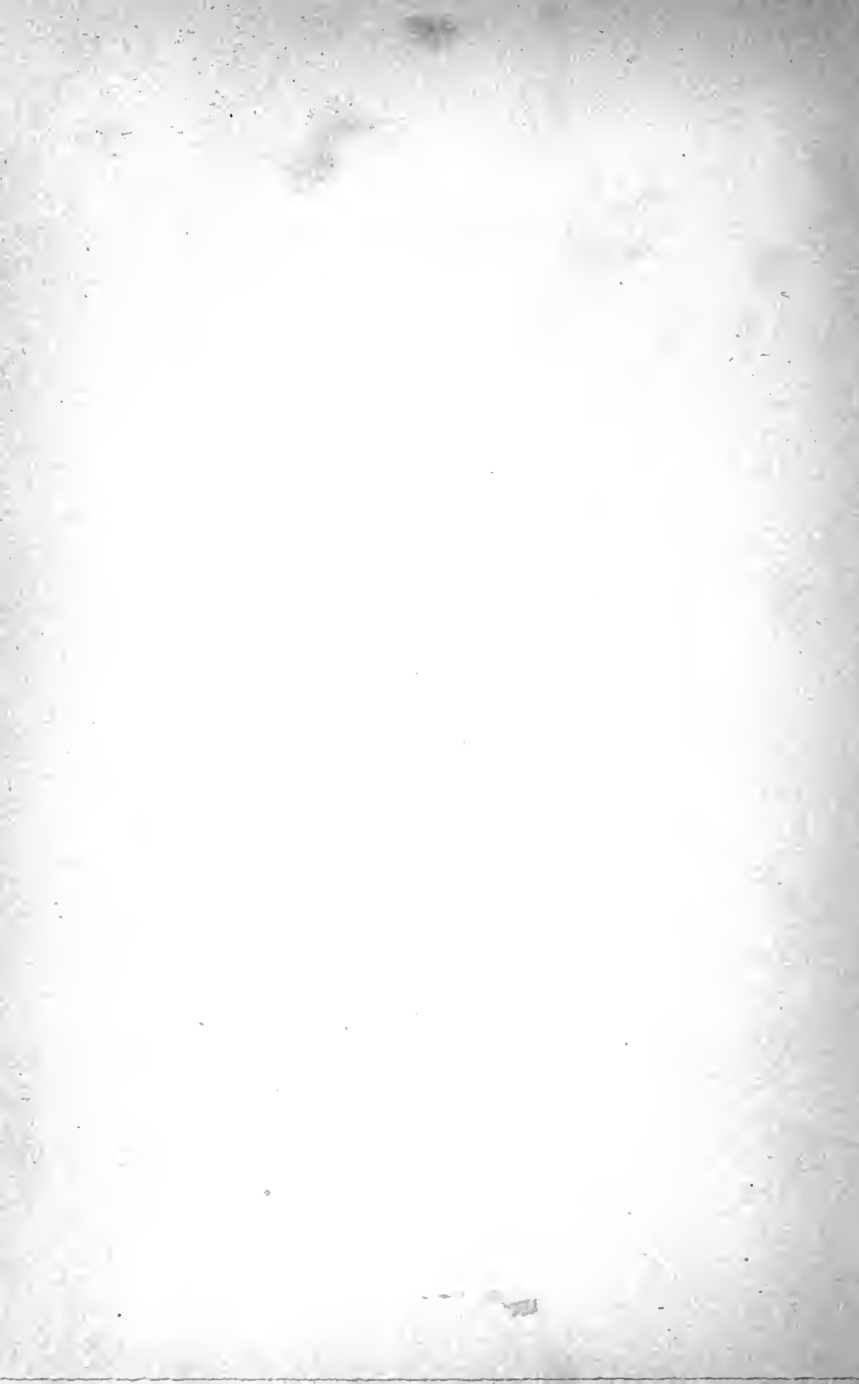
Francis  
Ledwidge

Somewhere is music from the linnets' bills,  
And thro' the sunny flowers the bee-wings drone,  
And white bells of convolvulus on hills  
Of quiet May make silent ringing, blown  
Hither and thither by the wind of showers,  
And somewhere all the wandering birds have flown;  
And the brown breath of Autumn chills the flowers.

But where are all the loves of long ago?  
O little twilight ship blown up the tide,  
Where are the faces laughing in the glow  
Of morning years, the lost ones scattered wide.  
Give me your hand, O brother, let us go  
Crying about the dark for those who died.



JOHN MASEFIELD





THE 'WANDERER.'

John  
Masfield

All day they loitered by the resting ships,  
Telling their beauties over, taking stock;  
At night the verdict left my messmates' lips,  
'The *Wanderer* is the finest ship in dock.'

I had not seen her, but a friend, since drowned,  
Drew her, with painted ports, low, lovely, lean,  
Saying, 'The *Wanderer*, clipper, outward bound,  
The loveliest ship my eyes have ever seen—

'Perhaps to-morrow you will see her sail.  
She sails at sunrise': but the morrow showed  
No *Wanderer* setting forth for me to hail;  
Far down the stream men pointed where she rode,

Rode the great trackway to the sea, dim, dim,  
Already gone before the stars were gone.  
I saw her at the sea-line's smoky rim  
Grow swiftly vaguer as they towed her on.

Soon even her masts were hidden in the haze  
Beyond the city; she was on her course  
To trample billows for a hundred days;  
That afternoon the norther gathered force,

Blowing a small snow from a point of east.  
'Oh, fair for her,' we said, 'to take her south.'  
And in our spirits, as the wind increased,  
We saw her there, beyond the river mouth,

Setting her side-lights in the wildering dark,  
To glint upon mad water, while the gale  
Roared like a battle, snapping like a shark,  
And drunken seamen struggled with the sail;

John  
Masefield

While with sick hearts her mates put out of mind  
Their little children left astern, ashore,  
And the gale's gathering made the darkness blind,  
Water and air one intermingled roar.

Then we forgot her, for the fiddlers played,  
Dancing and singing held our merry crew;  
The old ship moaned a little as she swayed.  
It blew all night, oh, bitter hard it blew!

So that at midnight I was called on deck  
To keep an anchor-watch: I heard the sea  
Roar past in white procession filled with wreck;  
Intense bright frosty stars burned over me,

And the Greek brig beside us dipped and dipped,  
White to the muzzle like a half-tide rock,  
Drowned to the mainmast with the seas she shipped;  
Her cable-swivels clanged at every shock.

And like a never-dying force, the wind  
Roared till we shouted with it, roared until  
Its vast vitality of wrath was thinned,  
Had beat its fury breathless and was still.

By dawn the gale had dwindled into flaw,  
A glorious morning followed: with my friend  
I climbed the fo'c's'le-head to see; we saw  
The waters hurrying shorewards without end.

Haze blotted out the river's lowest reach;  
Out of the gloom the steamers, passing by,  
Called with their sirens, hooting their sea-speech;  
Out of the dimness others made reply.

And as we watched there came a rush of feet  
Charging the fo'c's'le till the hatchway shook.  
Men all about us thrust their way, or beat,  
Crying, 'The *Wanderer* ! Down the river! Look!'

John  
Masefield

I looked with them towards the dimness; there  
Gleamed like a spirit striding out of night  
A full-rigged ship unutterably fair,  
Her masts like trees in winter, frosty-bright.

Foam trembled at her bows like wisps of wool;  
She trembled as she towed. I had not dreamed  
That work of man could be so beautiful,  
In its own presence and in what it seemed.

'So she is putting back again,' I said.  
'How white with frost her yards are on the fore!'  
One of the men about me answer made,  
'That is not frost, but all her sails are tore,

'Torn into tatters, youngster, in the gale;  
Her best foul-weather suit gone.' It was true,  
Her masts were white with rags of tattered sail  
Many as gannets when the fish are due.

† Beauty in desolation was her pride,  
Her crowned array a glory that had been;  
She faltered tow'rds us like a swan that died,  
But although ruined she was still a queen.

'Put back with all her sails gone,' went the word;  
Then, from her signals flying, rumour ran,  
'The sea that stove her boats in killed her third;  
She has been gutted and has lost a man.'

John  
Masfield

So, as though stepping to a funeral march,  
She passed defeated homewards whence she came  
Ragged with tattered canvas white as starch,  
A wild bird that misfortune had made tame.

She was refitted soon : another took  
The dead man's office ; then the singers hove  
Her capstan till the snapping hawsers shook ;  
Out, with a bubble at her bows, she drove.

Again they towed her seawards, and again  
We, watching, praised her beauty, praised her trim,  
Saw her fair house-flag flutter at the main,  
And slowly saunter seawards, dwindling dim ;

And wished her well, and wondered, as she died,  
How, when her canvas had been sheeted home,  
Her quivering length would sweep into her stride,  
Making the greenness milky with her foam.

But when we rose next morning, we discerned  
Her beauty once again a shattered thing ;  
Towing to dock the *Wanderer* returned,  
A wounded sea-bird with a broken wing.

A spar was gone, her rigging's disarray  
Told of a worse disaster than the last ;  
Like draggled hair dishevelled hung the stay  
Drooping and beating on the broken mast.

Half-mast upon her flagstaff hung her flag ;  
Word went among us how the broken spar  
Had gored her captain like an angry stag,  
And killed her mate a half-day from the bar.

She passed to dock upon the top of flood.  
An old man near me shook his head and swore:  
'Like a bad woman, she has tasted blood—  
There'll be no trusting in her any more.'

John  
Masefield

We thought it truth, and when we saw her there  
Lying in dock, beyond, across the stream,  
We would forget that we had called her fair,  
We thought her murderess and the past a dream.

And when she sailed again we watched in awe,  
Wondering what bloody act her beauty planned,  
What evil lurked behind the thing we saw,  
What strength was there that thus annulled man's  
hand,

How next its triumph would compel man's will  
Into compliance with external Fate,  
How next the powers would use her to work ill  
On suffering men; we had not long to wait.

For soon the outcry of derision rose,  
'Here comes the *Wanderer*!' the expected cry.  
Guessing the cause, our mockings joined with those  
Yelled from the shipping as they towed her by.

She passed us close, her seamen paid no heed  
To what was called: they stood, a sullen group,  
Smoking and spitting, careless of her need,  
Mocking the orders given from the poop.

Her mates and boys were working her; we stared.  
What was the reason of this strange return,  
This third annulling of the thing prepared?  
No outward evil could our eyes discern.

John  
Masfield      Only like someone who has formed a plan  
Beyond the pitch of common minds, she sailed,  
Mocked and deserted by the common man,  
Made half divine to me for having failed.

We learned the reason soon; below the town  
A stay had parted like a snapping reed,  
'Warning,' the men thought, 'not to take her down.'  
They took the omen, they would not proceed.

Days passed before another crew would sign.  
The *Wanderer* lay in dock alone, unmanned,  
'Feared as a thing possessed by powers malign,  
Bound under curses not to leave the land.

But under passing Time fear passes too;  
That terror passed, the sailors' hearts grew bold.  
We learned in time that she had found a crew  
And was bound out and southwards as of old.

And in contempt we thought, 'A little while  
Will bring her back again, dismantled, spoiled.  
It is herself; she cannot change her style;  
She has the habit now of being foiled.'

So when a ship appeared among the haze  
We thought, 'The *Wanderer* back again'; but no,  
No *Wanderer* showed for many, many days,  
Her passing lights made other waters glow.

But we would often think and talk of her,  
Tell newer hands her story, wondering, then,  
Upon what ocean she was *Wanderer*,  
Bound to the cities built by foreign men.

And one by one our little conclave thinned,  
Passed into ships, and sailed, and so away,  
To drown in some great roaring of the wind,  
Wanderers themselves, unhappy fortune's prey.

John  
Masefield

And Time went by me making memory dim,  
Yet still I wondered if the *Wanderer* fared  
Still pointing to the unreach'd ocean's rim,  
Brightening the water where her breast was bared.

And much in ports abroad I eyed the ships,  
Hoping to see her well-remembered form  
Come with a curl of bubbles at her lips  
Bright to her berth, the sovereign of the storm.

I never did, and many years went by;  
Then, near a Southern port, one Christmas Eve,  
I watched a gale go roaring through the sky,  
Making the cauldrons of the clouds upheave.

Then the wrack tattered and the stars appeared,  
Millions of stars that seemed to speak in fire;  
A byre-cock cried aloud that morning neared,  
The swinging wind-vane flashed upon the spire.

And soon men looked upon a glittering earth,  
Intensely sparkling like a world new-born;  
Only to look was spiritual birth,  
So bright the raindrops ran along the thorn.

So bright they were, that one could almost pass  
Beyond their twinkling to the source, and know  
The glory pushing in the blade of grass,  
That hidden soul which makes the flowers grow.

John  
Masefield      That soul was there apparent, not revealed;  
Unearthly meanings covered every tree;  
That wet grass grew in an immortal field;  
Those waters fed some never-wrinkled sea.

The scarlet berries in the hedge stood out  
Like revelations, but the tongue unknown;  
Even in the brooks a joy was quick; the trout  
Rushed in a dumbness dumb to me alone.

All of the valley was aloud with brooks;  
I walked the morning, breasting up the fells,  
Taking again lost childhood from the rooks,  
Whose cawing came above the Christmas bells.

I had not walked that glittering world before,  
But up the hill a prompting came to me,  
'This line of upland runs along the shore:  
Beyond the hedgerow I shall see the sea.'

And on the instant from beyond away  
That long familiar sound, a ship's bell, broke  
The hush below me in the unseen bay.  
Old memories came: that inner prompting spoke.

And bright above the hedge a seagull's wings  
Flashed and were steady upon empty air.  
'A Power unseen,' I cried, 'prepares these things;  
'Those are her bells, the *Wanderer* is there.'

So, hurrying to the hedge and looking down,  
I saw a mighty bay's wind-crinkled blue  
Ruffling the image of a tranquil town,  
With lapsing waters glittering as they grew.



And near me in the road the shipping swung,  
So stately and so still in such great peace  
That like to drooping crests their colours hung,  
Only their shadows trembled without cease.

John  
Masefield

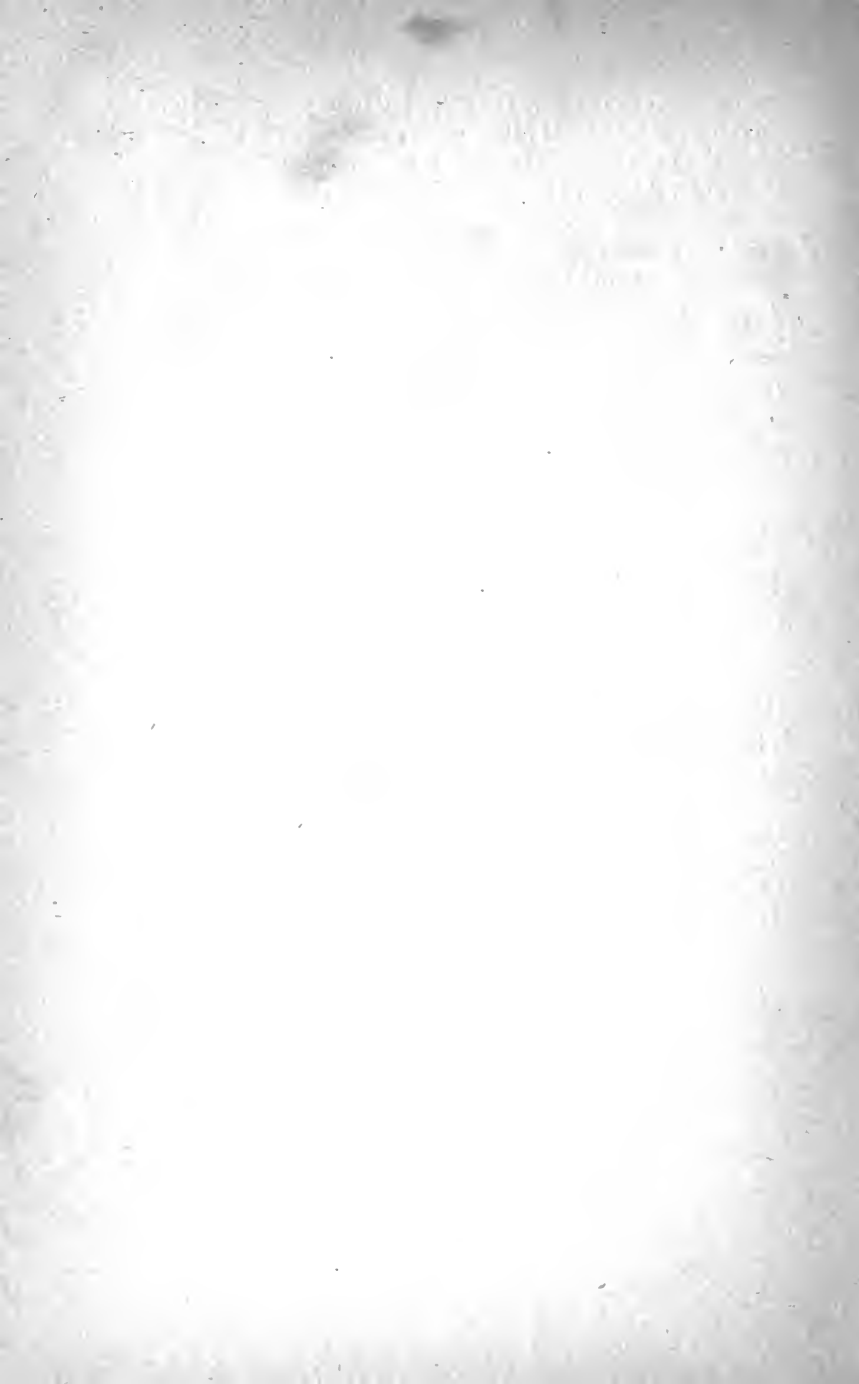
I did but glance upon those anchored ships.  
Even as my thought had told, I saw her plain;  
Tense, like a supple athlete with lean hips,  
Swiftness at pause, the *Wanderer* come again—

Come as of old a queen, untouched by Time,  
Resting the beauty that no seas could tire,  
Sparkling, as though the midnight's rain were rime,  
Like a man's thought transfigured into fire.

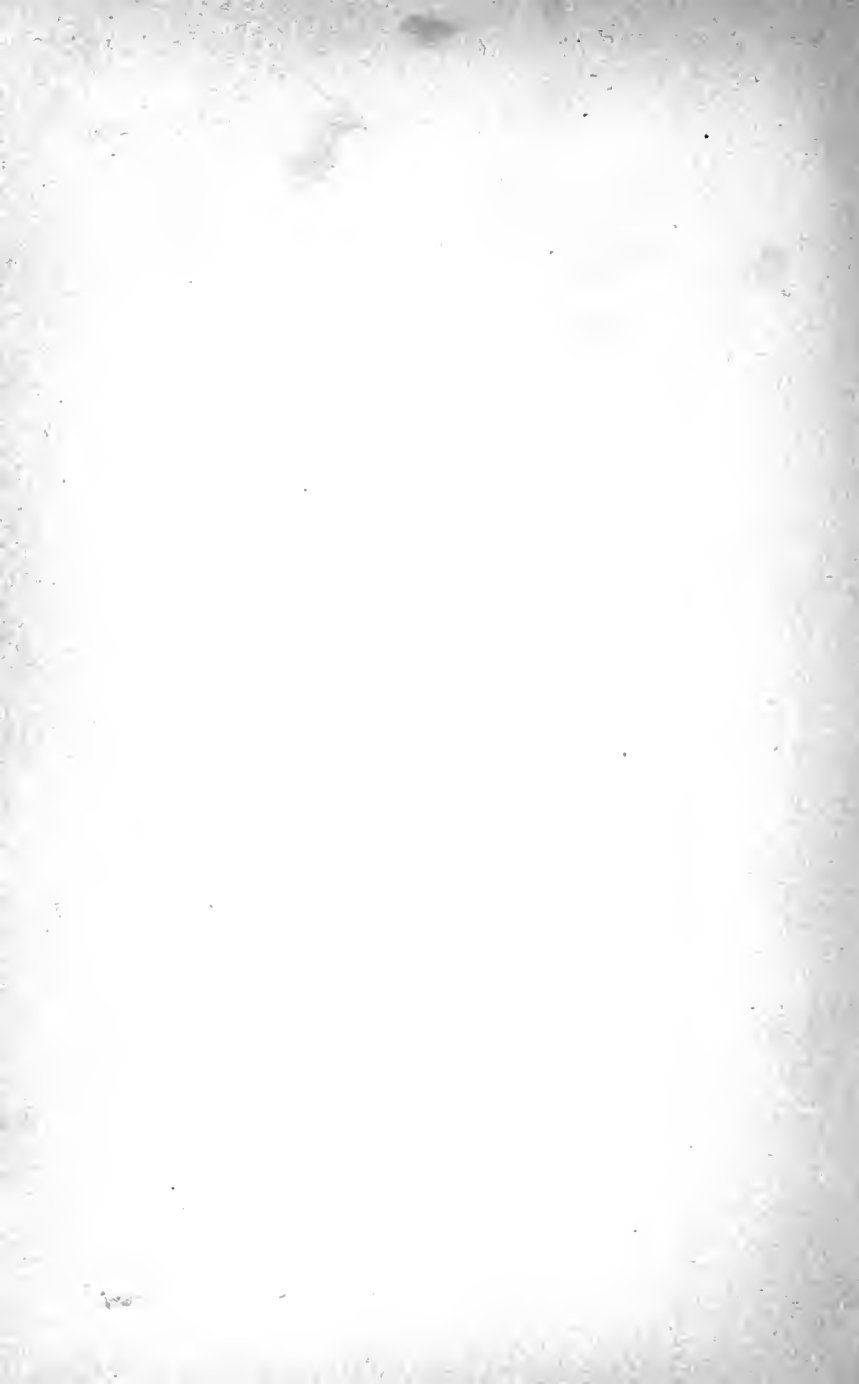
And as I looked, one of her men began  
To sing some simple tune of Christmas Day;  
Among her crew the song spread, man to man,  
Until the singing rang across the bay;

And soon in other anchored ships the men  
Joined in the singing with clear throats, until  
The farm-boy heard it up the windy glen,  
Above the noise of sheep-bells on the hill.

Over the water came the lifted song—  
Blind pieces in a mighty game we swing;  
Life's battle is a conquest for the strong;  
The meaning shows in the defeated thing.



HAROLD MONRO



## MILK FOR THE CAT.

Harold  
Monro

When the tea is brought at five o'clock,  
And all the neat curtains are drawn with care,  
The little black cat with bright green eyes  
Is suddenly purring there.

At first she pretends, having nothing to do,  
She has come in merely to blink by the grate,  
But, though tea may be late or the milk may be sour,  
She is never late.

And presently her agate eyes  
Take a soft large milky haze,  
And her independent casual glance  
Becomes a stiff, hard gaze.

Then she stamps her claws or lifts her ears,  
Or twists her tail and begins to stir,  
Till suddenly all her lithe body becomes  
One breathing, trembling purr.

The children eat and wriggle and laugh  
The two old ladies stroke their silk:  
But the cat is grown small and thin with desire,  
Transformed to a creeping lust for milk.

The white saucer like some full moon descends  
At last from the clouds of the table above;  
She sighs and dreams and thrills and glows,  
Transfigured with love.

She nestles over the shining rim,  
Buries her chin in the creamy sea;  
Her tail hangs loose; each drowsy paw  
Is doubled under each bending knee.

Harold  
Monro

A long, dim ecstasy holds her life;  
Her world is an infinite shapeless white,  
Till her tongue has curled the last holy drop,  
Then she sinks back into the night,

Draws and dips her body to heap  
Her sleepy nerves in the great arm-chair,  
Lies defeated and buried deep  
Three or four hours unconscious there.

OVERHEARD ON A SALT MARSH.

Harold  
Monro

Nymph, nymph, what are your beads?

Green glass, goblin. Why do you stare at them?

Give them me.

No.

Give them me. Give them me.

No.

Then I will howl all night in the reeds,  
Lie in the mud and howl for them.

Goblin, why do you love them so?

They are better than stars or water,  
Better than voices of winds that sing,  
Better than any man's fair daughter,  
Your green glass beads on a silver ring.

Hush, I stole them out of the moon.

Give me your beads, I want them.

No.

I will howl in a deep lagoon  
For your green glass beads, I love them so.  
Give them me. Give them.

No.

Harold  
Monro

## CHILDREN OF LOVE.

The holy boy  
Went from his mother out in the cool of the day  
Over the sun-parched fields  
And in among the olives shining green and shining  
grey.

There was no sound,  
No smallest voice of any shivering stream.  
Poor sinless little boy,  
He desired to play and to sing; he could only sigh  
and dream.

Suddenly came  
Running along to him naked, with curly hair,  
That rogue of the lovely world,  
That other beautiful child whom the virgin Venus  
bare.

The holy boy  
Gazed with those sad blue eyes that all men know.  
Impudent Cupid stood  
Panting, holding an arrow and pointing his bow.

(Will you not play?  
Jesus, run to him, run to him, swift for our joy.  
Is he not holy, like you?  
Are you afraid of his arrows, O beautiful dreaming  
boy?)

And now they stand  
Watching one another with timid gaze;  
Youth has met youth in the wood,  
But holiness will not change its melancholy ways.



Cupid at last  
Draws his bow and softly lets fly a dart.  
Smile for a moment, sad world!—  
It has grazed the white skin and drawn blood from  
the sorrowful heart.

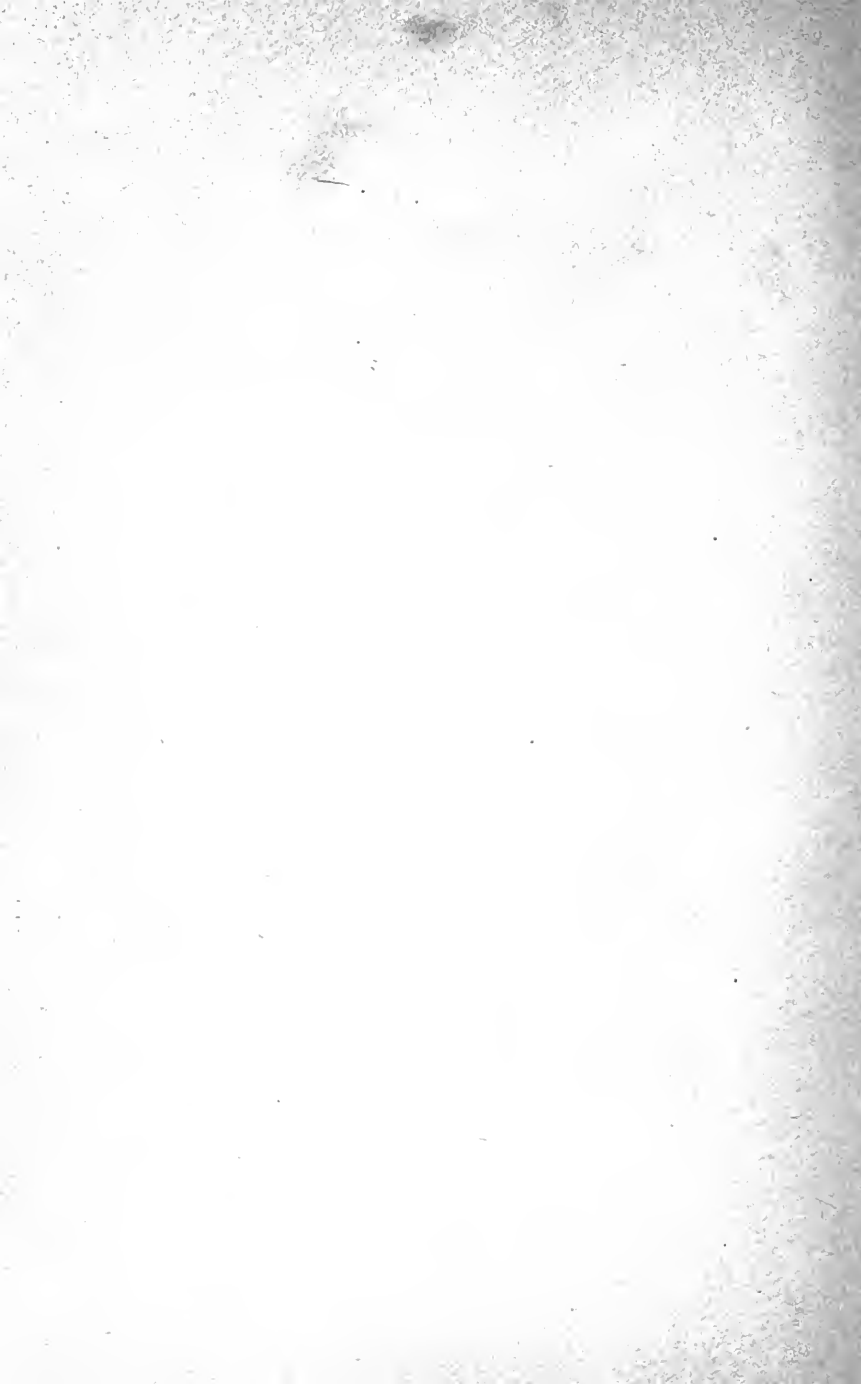
Harold  
Monro

Now, for delight,  
Cupid tosses his locks and goes wantonly near;  
But the child that was born to the cross  
Has let fall on his cheek, for the sadness of life,  
a compassionate tear.

Marvellous dream!  
Cupid has offered his arrows for Jesus to try;  
He has offered his bow for the game.  
But Jesus went weeping away, and left him there  
wondering why.



JAMES STEPHENS



## THE RIVALS

James  
Stephens

I heard a bird at dawn  
Singing sweetly on a tree,  
That the dew was on the lawn,  
And the wind was on the lea;  
But I didn't listen to him,  
For he didn't sing to me.

I didn't listen to him,  
For he didn't sing to me  
That the dew was on the lawn  
And the wind was on the lea;  
I was singing at the time  
Just as prettily as he.

I was singing all the time,  
Just as prettily as he,  
About the dew upon the lawn  
And the wind upon the lea;  
So I didn't listen to him  
And he sang upon a tree.

THE GOAT PATHS

The crooked paths go every way  
Upon the hill—they wind about  
Through the heather in and out  
Of the quiet sunniness.  
And there the goats, day after day,  
Stray in sunny quietness,  
Cropping here and cropping there,  
As they pause and turn and pass,  
Now a bit of heather spray,  
Now a mouthful of the grass.

In the deeper sunniness,  
In the place where nothing stirs,  
Quietly in quietness,  
In the quiet of the furze,  
For a time they come and lie  
Staring on the roving sky.

If you approach they run away,  
They leap and stare, away they bound,  
With a sudden angry sound,  
To the sunny quietude;  
Crouching down where nothing stirs  
In the silence of the furze,  
Couching down again to brood  
In the sunny solitude.

If I were as wise as they  
I would stray apart and brood,  
I would beat a hidden way  
Through the quiet heather spray  
To a sunny solitude;

And should you come I'd run away,  
I would make an angry sound,  
I would stare and turn and bound  
To the deeper quietude,  
To the place where nothing stirs  
In the silence of the furze.

James  
Stephens

In that airy quietness  
I would think as long as they;  
Through the quiet sunniness  
I would stray away to brood  
By a hidden beaten way  
In a sunny solitude.

I would think until I found  
Something I can never find,  
Something lying on the ground,  
In the bottom of my mind.

James  
Stephens

## THE SNARE

*To A. E.*

I hear a sudden cry of pain!  
There is a rabbit in a snare:  
Now I hear the cry again,  
But I cannot tell from where.

But I cannot tell from where  
He is calling out for aid;  
Crying on the frightened air,  
Making everything afraid.

Making everything afraid,  
Wrinkling up his little face,  
As he cries again for aid;  
And I cannot find the place!

And I cannot find the place  
Where his paw is in the snare:  
Little one! Oh, little one!  
I am searching everywhere.



## IN WOODS AND MEADOWS

James  
Stephens

Play to the tender stops, though cheerily:

Gently, my soul, my song: let no one hear:

Sing to thyself alone; thine ecstasy

Rising in silence to the inward ear

That is attuned to silence: do not tell

A friend, a bird, a star, lest they should say—

*He danced in woods and meadows all the day,*

*Waving his arms, and cried as evening fell,*

*'O, do not come,' and cried, 'O, come, thou queen,*

*And walk with me unwatched upon the green*

*Under the sky.'*

DEIRDRE

Do not let any woman read this verse;  
It is for men, and after them their sons  
And their sons' sons.

The time comes when our hearts sink utterly;  
When we remember Deirdre and her tale,  
And that her lips are dust.

Once she did tread the earth: men took her hand;  
They looked into her eyes and said their say,  
And she replied to them.

More than a thousand years it is since she  
Was beautiful: she trod the waving grass;  
She saw the clouds.

A thousand years! The grass is still the same,  
The clouds as lovely as they were that time  
When Deirdre was alive.

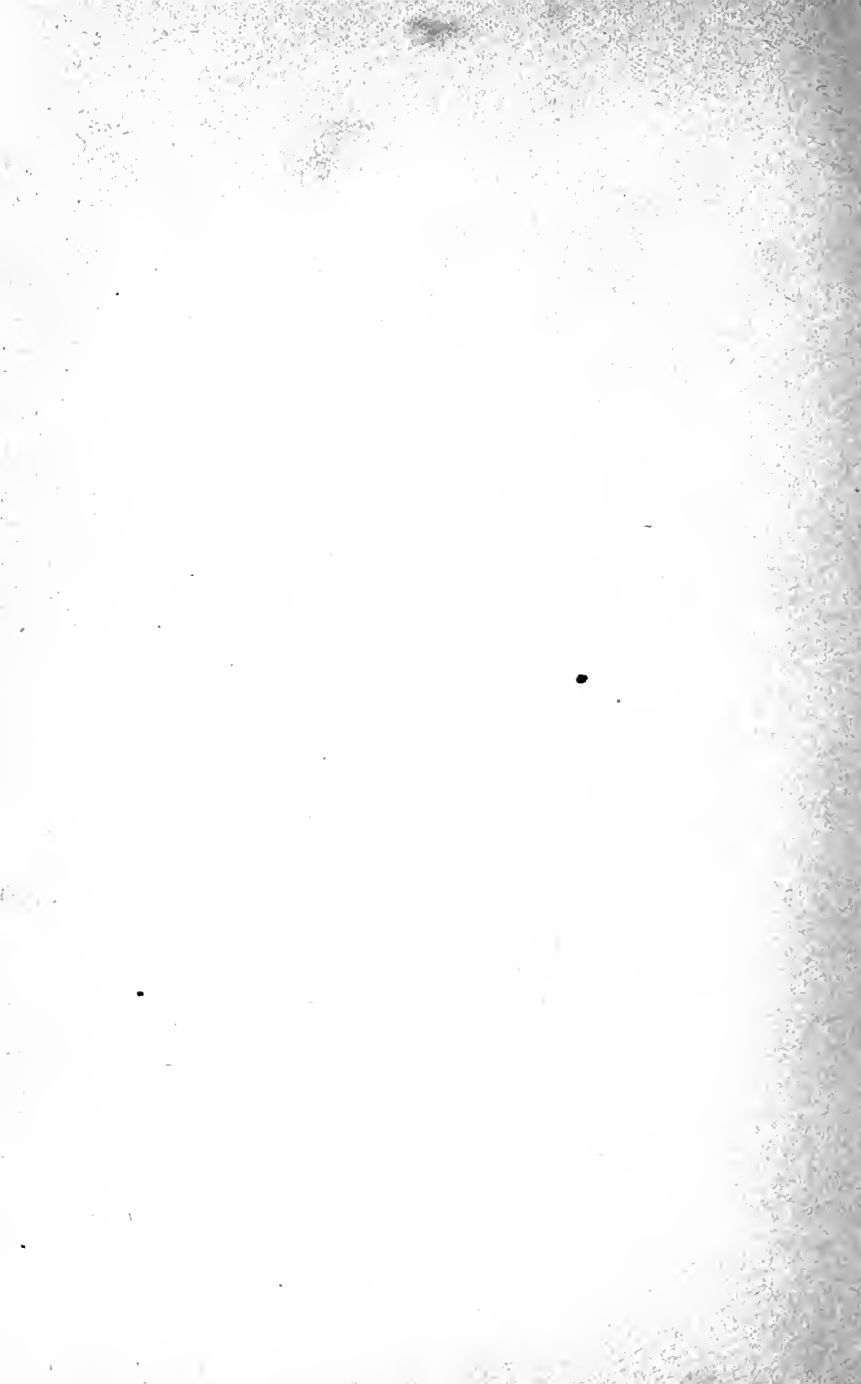
But there has never been a woman born  
Who was so beautiful, not one so beautiful  
Of all the women born.

Let all men go apart and mourn together;  
No man can ever love her; not a man  
Can ever be her lover.

No man can bend before her: no man say—  
What could one say to her? There are no words  
That one could say to her!

Now she is but a story that is told  
Beside the fire! No man can ever be  
The friend of that poor queen.

**LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE**



# THE END OF THE WORLD

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

## PERSONS

*HUFF, the Farmer.*  
*SOLLERS, the Wainwright.*  
*MERRICK, the Smith.*  
*VINE, the Publican.*  
*SHALE, the Labourer.*  
*A DOWSER.*  
*MRS HUFF.*  
*WARP, the Molecatcher*  
*Men and Women of the Village.*

## ACT I

*Scene: A public-house kitchen. HUFF the Farmer and  
SOLLERS the Wainwright talking; another  
man, a stranger, sitting silent.*

*Huff*

Ay, you may think we're well off—

*Sollers*

Now for croaks,

Old toad! who's trodden on you now?—Go on;

But if you can, croak us a new tune.

*Huff*

Ay,

You think you're well off—and don't grab my words  
Before they're spoken—but some folks, I've heard,  
Pity us, living quiet in the valley.

*Sollers*

Well, I suppose 'tis their affair.

*Huff*

Is it?

But what I mean to say,—if they think small

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

Of us that live in the valley, mayn't it show  
That we aren't all so happy as we think?

*MERRICK the Smith comes in.*

*Merrick*

Quick, cider! I believe I've swallowed a coal.

*Sollers*

Good evening. True, the heat's a wonder to-  
night. *[Smith draws himself cider.]*

*Huff*

Haven't you brought your flute? We've all got  
room

For music in our minds to-night, I'll swear.  
Working all day in the sun do seem to push  
The thought out of your brain.

*Sollers*

O, 'tis the sun

Has trodden on you? That's what makes you  
croak?

Ay, whistle him somewhat: put a tune in his  
brain;

He'll else croak us out of pleasure with drinking.

*Merrick*

'Tis quenching, I believe.—A tune? Too hot.  
You want a fiddler.

*Huff*

Nay, I want your flute.

I like a piping sound, not scraping o' guts.

*Merrick*

This is no weather for a man to play  
Flutes or music at all that asks him spend

His breath and spittle: you want both yourself  
These oven days. Wait till a fiddler comes.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Huff* Who ever comes down here?

*Sollers* There's someone come.  
[*Pointing with his pipe to the stranger.*]

*Merrick*  
Good evening, mister. Are you a man for tunes?

*Stranger*  
And if I was I'd give you none to-night.

*Merrick*  
Well, no offence: there's no offence, I hope,  
In taking a dummy for a tuneful man.  
Is it for can't or won't you are?

*Stranger*  
You wouldn't, if you carried in your mind  
What I've been carrying all day.

*Sollers* What's that?

*Stranger*  
You wait; you'll know about it soon; O yes,  
Soon enough it will find you out and rouse you.

*Huff*  
Now ain't that just the way we go down here?  
Here in the valley we're like dogs in a yard,  
Chained to our kennels and wall'd in all round,  
And not a sound of the world jumps over our hills.  
And when there comes a passenger among us,

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

One who has heard what's stirring out beyond,  
'Tis a grutchy mumchance fellow in the dismals!

*Stranger*

News, is it, you want? I could give you news!—  
I wonder, did you ever hate to feel  
The earth so fine and splendid?

*Huff*

Oh, you're one

Has stood in the brunt of the world's wickedness,  
Like me? But listen, and I'll give you a tale  
Of wicked things done in this little valley,  
Done against me, will surely make you think  
The Devil here fetcht up his masterpiece.

*Sollers*

Ah, but it's hot enough without you talking  
Your old hell fire about that pair of sinners.  
Leave them alone and drink.

*Huff*

I'll smell them grilling

One of these days.

*Merrick*

But there'll be nought to drink

When that begins! Best keep your skin full now.

*Stranger*

What do I care for wickedness? Let those  
Who've played with dirt, and thought the game  
was bold,  
Make much of it while they can: there's a big  
thing  
Coming down to us, ay, well on its road,  
Will make their ploys seem mighty piddling sport.



*Huff*

This is a fool; or else it's what I think,—

The world now breeds such crowd that they've no room

For well-grown sins: they hatch 'em small as flies.

But you stay here, out of the world awhile,

Here where a man's mind, and a woman's mind,

Can fling out large in wickedness: you'll see

Something monstrous here, something dreadful.

Lascelles

Aber-

crombie

*Stranger*

I've seen enough of that. Though it was only

Fancying made me see it, it was enough:

I've seen the folk of the world yelling aghast,

Scurrying to hide themselves. I want nought else

Monstrous and dreadful.—

*Merrick*

What had roused 'em so?

Some house afire?

*Huff*

A huzzy flogged to death

For her hard-faced adultery?

*Stranger (too intent to hear them)*

Oh to think of it!

Talk, do, chatter some nonsense, else I'll think:

And then I'm feeling like a grub that crawls

All abroad in a dusty road; and high

Above me, and shaking the ground beneath me,  
come

Wheels of a thundering wain, right where I'm  
plodding.

*Sollers* Queer thinking, that.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Stranger*

And here's a queerer thing.

I have a sort of lust in me, pushing me still  
Into that terrible way of thinking, like  
Black men in India lie them down and long  
To feel their holy wagon crack their spines.

*Merrick*

Do you mean beetles? I've driven over scores,  
They sprawling on their backs, or standing mazed.  
I never knew they liked it.

*Sollers*

He means frogs.

I know what's in his mind. When I was young  
My mother would catch us frogs and set them  
down,  
Lapt in a screw of paper, in the ruts,  
And carts going by would quash 'em; and I'd  
laugh,  
And yet be thinking, ' Suppose it was myself  
Twisted stiff in huge paper, and wheels  
Big as the wall of a barn treading me flat! '

*Huff*

I know what's in his mind: just madness it is.  
He's lookt too hard at his fellows in the world;  
Sight of their monstrous hearts, like devils in  
cages,  
Has jolted all the gearing of his wits.  
It needs a tough brain, ay, a brain like mine,  
To pore on ugly sin and not go mad.

*Stranger*

Madness! You're not far out.—I came up here  
To be alone and quiet in my thoughts,  
Alone in my own dreadful mind. The path,

Of red sand trodden hard, went up between  
High hedges overgrown of hawthorn blowing  
White as clouds; ay it seemed burrowed through  
A white sweet-smelling cloud,—I walking there  
Small as a hare that runs its tunnelled drove  
Thro' the close heather. And beside my feet  
Blue greygles drifted gleaming over the grass;  
And up I climbed to sunlight green in birches,  
And the path turned to daisies among grass  
With bonfires of the broom beside, like flame  
Of burning straw: and I lookt into your valley.  
I could scarce look.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

Anger was smarting in my eyes like grit.  
O the fine earth and fine all for nothing!  
Mazed I walkt, seeing and smelling and hearing:  
The meadow lands all shining fearfully gold,—  
Cruel as fire the sight of them toucht my mind;  
Breathing was all a honey taste of clover  
And bean flowers: I would have rather had it  
Carrion, or the stink of smouldering brimstone.  
And larks aloft, the happy piping fools,  
And squealing swifts that slid on hissing wings,  
And yellowhammers playing spry in hedges:  
I never noted them before; but now—  
Yes, I was mad, and crying mad, to see  
The earth so fine, fine all for nothing!

*Sollers (spits)*

Pst! yellowhammers! He talks gentry talk.  
That's worse than being mad.

*Stranger*

I tell you, you'll be feeling them to-morn  
And hating them to be so wonderful.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Merrick*

Let's have some sense. Where do you live?

*Stranger*

Nowhere.

I'm always travelling.

*Huff*

Why, what's your trade?

*Stranger* A dowser.

*Huff*

You're the man for me!

*Stranger*

Not I.

*Huff*

Ho, this is better than a fiddler now!

One of those fellows who have nerves so clever

That they can feel the waters of underground

Tingling in their fingers?

You find me a spring in my high grazing-field,

I'll give you what I save in trundling water.

*Stranger*

I find you water now!—No, but I'll find you

Fire and fear and unbelievable death.

*VINE the Publican comes in.*

*Vine*

Are ye all served? Ay, seems so; what's your score?

*Merrick* Two ciders.

*Huff*

Three.

*Sollers*                      And two for me.                      Lascelles

*Vine (to Dowser)*                      And you?                      Aber-  
crombie

*Dowser*   Naught. I was waiting on you.

*Vine*                      Will you drink?

*Dowser*

Ay! Drink! what else is left for a man to do  
Who knows what I know?

*Vine*                      Good. What is't you know?  
You tell it out and set my trade a-buzzing.

*Sollers*

He's queer. Give him his mug and ease his tongue.

*Vine*

I had to swill the pigs: else I'd been here;  
But we've the old fashion in this house; you draw,  
I keep the score. Well, what's the worry on you?

*Sollers*   Oh he's in love.

*Dowser*              You fleering grinning louts,  
I'll give it you now; now have it in your faces!

*Sollers*   Crimini, he's going to fight!

*Dowser*

You try and fight with the thing that's on my  
side!

*Merrick*   A ranter!

Lascelles     *Huff*     A boozy one then.

Aber-  
crombie

*Vine*

*Merrick* A Russian bear?

*Sollers*                      Dowsers can play strange games.

*Huff* No tricks!

*Dowser*      This is a trick to rouse the world.

[*He opens the door.*  
Look out! Between the elms! There's my fierce  
thing.

Merrick

*Sollers.* Comet, it's called.

*Huff* Do you mean the comet, mister?

*Dowser* What do you think of it?

*Huff*                      Pretty enough.

But I saw a man loose off a rocket once;  
It made more stir and flare of itself; though yon  
Does better at steady burning.

*Dowser*

You'll soon forget your rocket.

Stir and flare!

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Merrick*

Tell you what

I thought last night, now, going home. Says I,  
'Tis just like the look of a tadpole: if I saw  
A tadpole silver as a dace that swam  
Upside-down towards me through black water,  
I'd see the plain spit of that star and his tail.

*Sollers*

And how does your thought go?

*Dowser*

It's what I know!—

A tadpole and a rocket!—My dear God,  
And I can still laugh out!—What do you think  
Your tadpole's made of? What lets your rocket  
fling

Those streaming sparks across the half of night,  
Splashing the burning spray of its haste among  
The quiet business of the other stars?  
Ay, that's a fiery jet it leaves behind  
In such enormous drift! What sort of fire  
Is spouted so, spouted and never quenching?—  
There is no name for that star's fire: it is  
The fire that was before the world was made,  
The fire that all the things we live among  
Remember being; and whitest fire we know  
Is its poor copy in their dreaming trance!

*Huff*

That would be hell fire.

*Dowser*

Ay, if you like, hell fire,  
Hell fire flying through the night! 'Twould be

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

A thing to blink about, a blast of it  
Swept in your face, eh? and a thing to set  
The whole stuff of the earth smoking rarely?  
Which of you said 'the heat's a wonder to-night'?  
You have not done with marvelling. There'll come  
A night when all your clothes are a pickle of sweat,  
And, for all that, the sweat on your salty skin  
Shall dry and crack, in the breathing of a wind  
That's like a draught come through an open'd  
furnace.

The leafage of the trees shall brown and faint,  
All sappy growth turning to brittle rubbish  
As the near heat of the star strokes the green  
earth;

And time shall brush the fields as visibly  
As a rough hand brushes against the nap  
Of gleaming cloth—killing the season's colour,  
Each hour charged with the wasting of a year;  
And sailors panting on their warping decks  
Will watch the sea steam like broth about them.  
You'll know what I know then!—That towering  
star

Hangs like a fiery buzzard in the night  
Intent over our earth—Ay, now his journey  
Points, straight as a plummet's drop, down to us!

*Huff* Why, that's the end of the world!

*Dowser* You've said it now.

*Sollers* What, soon? In a day or two?

*Merrick* You can't mean that!

*Vine*

End of the World! Well now, I never thought



To hear the news of that. If you've the truth  
In what you say, likely this is an evening  
That we'll be talking over often and often.  
'How was it, Sollers?' I'll say; 'or you, Merrick,  
Do you mind clearly how he lookt?'—And  
then—  
'“End of the world” he said, and drank—like  
that,  
Solemn!’—And right he was: he had it all  
As sure as I have when my sow's to farrow.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Dowser*

Are you making a joke of me? Keep your mind  
For tippling while you can.

*Vine*

Was that a joke?  
I'm always bad at seeing 'em, even my own.

*Dowser*

A fool's! 'Twill cheer you when the earth blows  
up  
Like as it were all gunpowder.

*Vine*

You mean  
The star will butt his burning head against us?  
'Twill knock the world to flinders, I suppose?

*Dowser*

Ay, or with that wild, monstrous tail of his  
Smash down upon the air, and make it bounce  
Like water under the flukes of a harpooned whale,  
And thrash it to a poisonous fire; and we  
And all the life of the world drowned in blazing!

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Vine*

'Twill be a handsome sight. If my old wife  
Were with me now! This would have suited her.  
'I do like things to happen!' she would say;  
Never shindy enough for her; and now  
She's gone, and can't be seeing this!

*Dowser*

You poor fool.

How will it be a sight to you, when your eyes  
Are scorcht to little cinders in your head?

*Vine*

Whether or no, there must be folks outside  
Willing to know of this. I'll scatter your news.

[*He goes.*

[*A short pause: then SOLLERS breaks out.*

*Sollers*

No, no; it wouldn't do for me at all;  
Nor for you neither, Merrick? End of the World?  
Bogy! A parson's tale or a bairn's!

*Merrick*

That's it.

Your trade's a gift, easy as playing tunes.  
But Sollers here and I, we've had to drill  
Sinew and muscle into their hard lesson,  
Until they work in timber and glowing iron  
As kindly as I pick up my pint: your work  
Grows in your nature, like plain speech in a child,  
But we have learnt to think in a foreign tongue;  
And something must come out of all our skill!  
We shan't go sliding down as glib as you  
Into notions of the End of the World.

*Sollers*

Give me a tree, you may say, and give me steel,  
And I'll put forth my shapely mind; I'll make,  
Out of my head like telling a well-known tale,  
A wain that goes as comely on the roads  
As a ship sailing, the lines of it true as gospel.  
Have I learnt that all for nothing?—O no!  
End of the World? It wouldn't do at all.  
No more making of wains, after I've spent  
My time in getting the right skill in my hands?

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Dowser*

Ay, you begin to feel it now, I think;  
But you complain like boys for a game spoilt:  
Shaping your carts, forging your iron! But Life,  
Life, the mother who lets her children play  
So seriously busy, trade and craft,—  
Life with her skill of a million years' perfection  
To make her heart's delighted glorying  
Of sunlight, and of clouds about the moon,  
Spring lighting her daffodils, and corn  
Ripening gold to ruddy, and giant seas,  
And mountains sitting in their purple clothes—  
O life I am thinking of, life the wonder,  
All blotcht out by a brutal thrust of fire  
Like a midge that a clumsy thumb squashes and  
smears.

*Huff*

Let me but see the show beginning, though!  
You'd mind me then! O I would like you all  
To watch how I should figure, when the star  
Brandishes over the whole air its flame  
Of thundering fire; and naught but yellow rubbish  
Parcht on the perishing ground, and there are  
tongues

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

Chapt with thirst, glad to lap stinking ponds,  
And pale glaring faces spying about  
On the earth withering, terror the only speech!  
Look for me then, and see me stand alone  
Easy and pleasant in the midst of it all.  
Did you not make your merry scoff of me?  
Was it your talk, that when yon shameless pair  
Threw their wantoning in my face like dirt,  
I had no heart against them but to grumble?  
You would be saying that, I know! But now,  
Now I believe it's time for you to see  
My patient heart at last taking its wages.

*Sollers*

Pull up, man! Screw the brake on your running  
tongue,  
Else it will rattle you down the tumbling way  
This fellow's gone.

*Merrick*

And one man's enough  
With brain quagged axle-deep in crazy mire.  
We won't have you beside him in his puddles,  
And calling out with him on the End of the  
World  
To heave you out with a vengeance.

*Huff*

What you want!  
Have I not borne enough to make me know  
I must be righted sometime?—And what else  
Would break the hardy sin in them, which lets  
Their souls parade so daring and so tall  
Under God's hate and mine? What else could pay  
For all my wrong but a blow of blazing anger  
Striking down to shiver the earth, and change  
Their strutting wickedness to horror and crying?

*Merrick*

Be quiet, Huff! If you mean to believe  
This dowser's stuff, and join him in his bedlam,  
By God, you'll have to reckon with my fist.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*SHALE comes in. HUFF glares at him speechless,  
but with wrath evidently working.*

*Shale*

Where's the joker? You, is it? Here's hot news  
You've brought us; all the valley's hissing aloud,  
And makes as much of you falling into it  
As a pail of water would of a glowing coal.

*Sollers*

Don't you start burbling too, Shale.

*Shale*

That's the word!

Burbling, simmering, ay and bumpy-boiling :  
All the women are mobbed together close  
Under the witan-trees, and their full minds  
Boil like so many pans slung on a fire.  
Why, starlings trooping in a copse in fall  
Could make no scandal like it.

*Merrick*

What is it, man?

*Shale*

End of the World! The flying star! End of the  
World!

*Sollers* They don't believe it though?

*Shale*

What? the whole place  
Has gone just randy over it!

Lascelles      Merrick      Hold your noise!  
Aber-  
crombie      Sollers      I shall be daft if this goes on.

Shale      Ay, so?  
The End of the World's been here? You look as  
though  
You'd startled lately. And there's the virtuous  
man!  
How would End of the World suit our good Huff,  
Our old crab-verjuice Huff?

*HUFF (seizing the DOWSER and bringing him up  
in front of SHALE)*

Look at him there!  
This is the man I told you of when you  
Were talking small of sin. You made it out,  
Did you, a fool's mere nasty game, like dogs  
That snuggle in muck, and grin and roll them-  
selves  
With snorting pleasure? Ah, but you are wrong.  
'Tis something that goes thrusting dreadfully  
Its wilful bravery of evil against  
The worth and right of goodness in the world:  
Ay, do you see how his face still brags at me?  
And long it has been, the time he's had to walk  
Lording about me with his wickedness.  
Do you know what he dared? I had a wife,  
A flighty pretty linnet-headed girl,  
But mine: he practised on her with his eyes;  
He knew of luring glances, and she went  
After his calling lust: and all since then  
They've lived together, fleering in my face,  
Pleased in sight of the windows of my house  
With doing wrong, and making my disgrace.

O but wait here with me; wait till your news  
 Is not to be mistaken, for the way  
 The earth buckles and sings like hot boards:  
 You'll surely see how dreadful sin can be  
 Then, when you mark these two running about,  
 With raging fear for what they did against me  
 Buzzing close to their souls, stinging their hearts,  
 And they like scampering beasts when clegs are  
     fierce,  
 Or flinging themselves low as the ground to  
     writhe,  
 Their arms hugging their desperate heads. And  
     then  
 You'll see what 'tis to be an upright man,  
 Who keeps a patient anger for his wrongs  
 Thinking of judgment coming—you will see that  
 When you mark how my looks hunt these wret-  
     ches,  
 And smile upon their groans and posturing  
     anguish.  
 O watch how calm I'll be, when the blazing air  
 Judges their wickedness; you watch me then  
 Looking delighted, like a nobleman  
 Who sees his horse winning an easy race.

Lascelles  
 Aber-  
 crombie

*Merrick*

You fool, Huff, you believe it now!

*Huff*

You fool,

Merrick, how should I not believe a thing  
 That calls aloud on my mind and spirit, and they  
 Answer to it like starving conquering soldiers  
 Told to break out and loot?

*Shale*

You vile old wasp!

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Sollers*

We've talkt enough: let's all go home and sleep;  
There might be a fiend in the air about us, one  
Who pours his will into our minds to see  
How we can frighten one another.

*Huff*

A fiend!

Shale will soon have the flapping wings of a  
fiend,  
And flaming wings, beating about his head.  
There'll be no air for Shale, very soon now,  
But the breathing of a fiend: the star's coming!  
The star that breathes a horrible fury of fire  
Like glaring fog into the empty night;  
And in the gust of its wrath the world will soon  
Shrivel and spin like paper in a furnace.  
I knew they both would have to pay me at last  
With sight of their damned souls for all my  
wrong!

*Shale* Somebody stop his gab.

*Merrick (seizing the DOWSER and shaking him)*

Is it the truth?

Is it the truth we're in the way of the star?

*Sollers*

O let us go home; let us go home and sleep!

*A crowd of men and women burst in and shout con-  
fusedly.*

1. Look out for the star!

2. 'Tis moving, moving.

3. Grows as you stare at it.

4. Bigger than ever.



1. Down it comes with a diving pounce,  
As though it had lookt for us and at last found us.
2. O so near and coming so quick!
3. And how the burning hairs of its tail  
Do seem surely to quiver for speed.
4. We saw its great tail twitch behind it.  
'Tis come so near, so gleaming near.
1. The tail is wagging!
2. Come out and see!
3. The star is wagging its tail and eyeing us—
4. Like a cat huncht to leap on a bird.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Merrick*

Out of my way and let me see for myself.

*[They all begin to hustle out:  
HUFF speaks in midst of the turmoil.]*

*Huff*

Ay, now begins the just man's reward;  
And hatred of the evil thing  
Now is to be satisfied.  
Wrong ventured out against me and braved:  
And I'll be glad to see all breathing pleasure  
Burn as foolishly to naught  
As a moth in candle flame,  
If I but have my will to watch over those  
Who injured me bawling hoarse heartless fear.

*They are all gone but HUFF, SHALE and the  
DOWSER.*

*Shale*

As for you, let you and the women make  
Your howling scare of this; I'll stand and laugh.  
But if it truly were the End of the World,  
I'd be the man to face it out, not you:

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

I who have let life go delighted through me,  
Not you, who've sulkt away your chance of life  
In mumping about being paid for goodness.

[*Going.*

*Huff (after him)*

You wait, you wait!

[*He follows the rest.*

*Dowser (alone)*

Naught but a plague of flies!

I cannot do with noises, and light fools  
Terrified round me; I must go out and think  
Where there is quiet and no one near. O, think!  
Life that has done such wonders with its think-  
ing,

And never daunted in imagining;  
That has put on the sun and the shining night,  
The flowering of the earth and tides of the sea,  
And irresistible rage of fate itself,  
All these as garments for its spirit's journey—  
O now this life, in the brute chance of things,  
Murder'd, uselessly murder'd! And naught else  
For ever but senseless rounds of hurrying motion  
That cannot glory in itself. O no!  
I will not think of that; I'll blind my brain  
With fancying the splendours of destruction;  
When like a burr in the star's fiery mane  
The crackling earth is caught and rusht along,  
The forests on the mountains blazing so,  
That from the rocks of ore beneath them come  
White-hot rivers of smelted metal pouring  
Across the plains to roar into the sea. . . .

*The curtain is lowered for a few moments only.*

# ACT II

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*As before, a little while after. The room is empty when the curtain goes up. SOLLERS runs in and paces about, but stops short when he catches sight of a pot dog on the mantelpiece.*

*Sollers*

The pace it is coming down!—What to do now?—  
My brain has stopt: it's like a clock that's fallen  
Out of a window and broke all its cogs.—

Where's that old cider, Vine would have us pay  
Twopence a glass for? Let's try how it smells:  
Old Foxwhelp, and a humming stingo it is!

*(To the pot dog)*

Hullo, you! What are you grinning at?—

I know!

There'll be no score against me for this drink!

O that score! I've drunk it down for a week

With every gulp of cider, and every gulp

Was half the beauty it should have been, the score

So scratcht my swallowing throat, like a wasp in  
the drink!

And I need never have heeded it!—

Old grinning dog! You've seen me happy here;

And now, all's done! But do you know this too,

That I can break you now, and never called

To pay for you? *[Throwing the dog on the floor.*

*I shall be savage soon!*

We're leaving all this!—O, and it was so pleasant

Here, in here, of an evening.—Smash!

*[He sweeps a lot of crockery on to the floor.*

It's all no good! Let's make a wreck of it all!

*[Picking up a chair and swinging it.*

Damn me! Now I'm forgetting to drink, and soon

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

'Twill be too late. Where's there a mug not  
shivered?

*[He goes to draw himself cider. MERRICK  
rushes in.]*

*Merrick*

You at the barrels too? Out of the road!

*[He pushes SOLLERS away and spills his mug.]*

*Sollers*

Go and kick out of doors, you black donkey.

*Merrick*

Let me come at the vessel, will you?

*[They wrestle savagely.]*

*Sollers*

Keep off;

I'm the first here. Lap what you've spilt of mine.

*Merrick*

You with your chiselling and screw-driving,  
Your wooden work, you bidding me, the man  
Who hammers a meaning into red hot iron?

*VINE comes in slowly. He is weeping; the two  
wrestlers stop and stare at him, as he sits  
down, and holds his head in his hands,  
sobbing.*

*Vine* O this is a cruel affair!

*Sollers*

Here's Vine crying!

*Vine* I've seen the moon.

*Merrick*                    The moon? 'Tisn't the moon  
That's tumbling on us, but yon raging star.  
What notion now is clotted in your head?

Lascell<sup>es</sup>  
Aber-  
crombie

*Vine*

I've seen the moon; it has nigh broke my heart.

*Sollers*

Not the moon too jumping out of her ways?

*Vine*

No, no;—but going quietly and shining,  
Pushing away a flimsy gentle cloud  
That would drift smoky round her, fending it off  
With steady rounds of blue and yellow light.  
It was not much to see. She was no more  
Than a curved bit of silver rind. But I  
Never before so noted her—

*Sollers*

The dowser!

What he said,

*Merrick*

Ay, about his yellowhammers.

*Sollers*

And there's a kind of stifle in the air  
Already!

*Merrick*

It seems to me, my breathing goes  
All hot down my windpipe, hot as cider  
Mulled and steaming travels down my swallow.

*Sollers*

And a queer racing through my ears of blood.

Lascelles      *Merrick*

Aber-      I wonder, is the star come closer still?  
crombie

*Sollers*

O, close, I know, and viciously heading down.

*Vine*

She was so silver! and the sun had left  
A kind of tawny red, a dust of fine  
Thin light upon the blue where she was lying,—  
Just a curled paring of the moon, amid  
The faint grey cloud that set the gleaming wheel  
Around the tilted slip of shining silver.  
O it did seem to me so safe and homely,  
The moon quietly going about the earth;  
It's a rare place we have to live in, here;  
And life is such a comfortable thing—  
And what's the sense of it all? Naught but to make  
Cruel as may be the slaughtering of it.

*[He breaks down again.]*

*Sollers*      It beats my mind!

*[He begins to walk up and down desperately.]*

*Merrick*      'Twas bound to come sometime,  
Bound to come, I suppose. 'Tis a poor thing  
For us, to fall plumb in the chance of it;  
But, now or another time, 'twas bound to be.—  
I have been thinking back. When I was a lad  
I was delighted with my life: there seemed  
Naught but things to enjoy. Say we were bathing:  
There'd be the cool smell of the water, and cool  
The splashing under the trees: but I did loathe  
The sinking mud slithering round my feet,  
And I did love to loathe it so! And then

We'd troop to kill a wasp's nest; and for sure  
I would be stung; and if I liked the dusk  
And singing and the game of it all, I loved  
The smart of the stings, and fleeing the buzzing  
furies.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

And sometimes I'd be looking at myself  
Making so much of everything; there'd seem  
A part of me speaking about myself:  
'You know, this is much more than being happy.  
'Tis hunger of some power in you, that lives  
On your heart's welcome for all sorts of luck,  
But always looks beyond you for its meaning.'  
And that's the way the world's kept going on,  
I believe now. Misery and delight  
Have both had liking welcome from it, both  
Have made the world keen to be glad and sorry.  
For why? It felt the living power thrive  
The more it made everything, good and bad,  
Its own belonging, forged to its own affair,—  
The living power that would do wonders some  
day.

I don't know if you take me?

*Sollers*

I do, fine;

I've felt the very thought go through my mind  
When I was at my wains; though 'twas a thing  
Of such a flight I could not read its colour.—  
Why was I like a man sworn to a thing  
Working to have my wains in every curve,  
Ay, every tenon, right and as they should be?  
Not for myself, not even for those wains:  
But to keep in me living at its best  
The skill that must go forward and shape the  
world,  
Helping it on to make some masterpiece.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Merrick*

And never was there aught to come of it!  
The world was always looking to use its life  
In some great handsome way at last. And now—  
We are just fooled. There never was any good  
In the world going on or being at all.  
The fine things life has plotted to do are worth  
A rotten toadstool kickt to flying bits.  
End of the World? Ay, and the end of a joke.

*Vine* Well, Huff's the man for this turn.

*Merrick*

Ay, the good man!

He could but grunt when times were pleasant; now  
There's misery enough to make him trumpet.  
And yet, by God, he shan't come blowing his horn  
Over my misery!

We are just fooled, did I say?—We fooled our-  
selves,

Looking for worth in what was still to come;  
And now there's a stop to our innings. Well,  
that's fair:

I've been a living man, and might have been  
Nothing at all! I've had the world about me,  
And felt it as my own concern. What else  
Should I be crying for? I've had my turn.

The world may be for the sake of naught at last,  
But it has been for my sake: I've had that.

[*He sits again, and broods.*

*Sollers*

I can't stay here. I must be where my sight  
May silence with its business all my thinking—  
Though it will be the star plunged down so close  
It puffs its flaming vengeance in my face.

[*He goes.*



*Vine*

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

I wish there were someone who had done me  
wrong,  
Like Huff with his wife and Shale; I wish there were  
Somebody I would like to see go crazed  
With staring fright. I'd have my pleasure then  
Of living on into the End of the World.  
But there is no one at all for me, no one  
Now my poor wife is gone.

*Merrick*

Why, what did she

To harm you?

*Vine*

Didn't she marry me?—It's true  
She made it come all right. She died at last.  
Besides, it would be wasting wishes on her,  
To be in hopes of her weeping at this.  
She'd have her hands on her hips and her  
tongue jumping  
As nimble as a stoat, delighting round  
The way the world's to be terrible and tor-  
mented.—  
Ay, but I'll have a thing to tell her now  
When she begins to ask the news! I'll say  
' You've misst such a show as never was nor will  
be,  
A roaring great affair of death and ruin;  
And I was there—the world smasht to sparkles! '  
O, I can see her vext at that!

*MERRICK has been sunk in thought during this, but VINE seems to brighten at his notion, and speaks quite cheerfully to HUFF, who now comes in, looking mopish, and sits down.*

Lascelles *Vine*  
Aber- We've all been envying you, Huff. You're well off,  
crombie You with your goodness and your enemies  
Showing you how to relish it with their terror.  
When do you mean the gibing is to start?

*Huff* There's time enough.

*Vine* O, do they still hold out?  
If they should be for spiting you to the last!  
You'd best keep on at them: think out a list  
Of frantic things for them to do, when air  
Is scorching smother and the sin they did  
Frightens their hearts. You'll shout them into fear,  
I undertake, if you find breath enough.

*Huff*  
You have the breath. What's all your pester for?  
You leave me be

*Vine* Why, you're to do for me  
What I can't do myself.—And yet it's hard  
To make out where Shale hurt you. What's the  
sum  
Of all he did to you? Got you quit of marriage  
Without the upset of a funeral.

*Huff*  
Why need you blurt your rambling mind at me?  
Let me bide quiet in my thought awhile,  
And it's a little while we have for thought.

*Merrick*  
I know your thought. Paddling round and  
around,

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

My good life!

Well done!—O but I should have guesst all this!

*Huff*

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

Was really wearing clothes : half of a sack  
Pinned in an apron was enough for most,  
And here and there might be a petticoat ;  
But nothing in the way of bodices.—  
O, they knew words to shame a carter's face!

*Merrick*

This is the thought you would be quiet in!

*Huff*

Where else can I be quiet? Now there's an end  
Of daring, 'tis the one place my life has made  
Where I may try to dare in thought. I mind,  
When I stood in the midst of those bare women,  
All at once, outburst with a rising buzz,  
A mob of flying thoughts was wild in me:  
Things I might do swarmed in my brain pell-  
mell,  
Like a heap of flies kickt into humming cloud.  
I beat them down; and now I cannot tell  
For certain what they were. I can call up  
Naught venturesome and darting like their style;  
Very tame braveries now!—O Shale's the man  
To smile upon the End of the World; 'tis Shale  
Has lived the bold stiff fashion, and filled himself  
With thinking pride in what a man may do.—  
I wish I had seen those women more than once!

*Vine*

Well, here's an upside down! This is old Huff!  
What have you been in your heart all these years?  
The man you were or the new man you are?

*Huff* Just a dead flesh!

<i>Merrick</i>	Nay, Huff the good man at least	Lascelles
Was something alive, though snarling like trapt		Aber-
vermin.		crombie
But this? What's this for the figure of a man?		
'Tis a boy's smutty picture on a wall.		

*Huff*

I was alive, was I? Like a blind bird  
That flies and cannot see the flight it takes,  
Feeling it with mere rowing of its wings.  
But Shale—he's had a stirring sense of what he is.

*Shouting outside. Then SOLLERS walks in again, very quiet and steady. He stands in the middle, looking down on the floor.*

*Vine* What do they holla for there?

*Sollers*                      The earth.

*Merrick*    The earth?

*Sollers* The earth's afire.

*Huff*                The earth blazing already?  
[*Shouts again.*  
O, not so soon as this?

*Vine*                      What sort of a fire?

*Sollers*  
The earth has caught the heat of the star, you fool.

*Merrick*  
I know: there's come some dazzle in your eyes  
From facing to the star; a lamp would do it.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Huff*

It will be that. Your sight, being so strained,  
Is flashing of itself.

*Sollers*

Say what you like.

There's a red flare out of the land beyond  
Looking over the hills into our valley.  
The thing's begun, 'tis certain. Go and see.

*Vine* I won't see that. I will stay here.

*Sollers*

Ay, creep

Into your oven. You'll be cooler there.—

O my God, we'll all be coals in an hour!

*[Shouts again.]*

*Huff*

And I have naught to stand in my heart upright,  
And vow it made my living time worth more  
Than if my time had been death in a grave!

*Several persons run in.*

*The Crowd*

1. The river's the place!

2. The only safe place now!

3. Best all charge down to the river!

4. For there's a blaze,  
A travelling blaze comes racing along the earth.

*Sollers*

'Tis true. The air's red-hot above the hills.

*The Crowd*

1. Ay, but the burning now crests the hill-tops  
In quiver of yellow flame.

2. And a great smoke  
Waving and tumbling upward.



Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Mrs Huff* (to *SHALE*)  
Listen.

Once more,

*Shale* I will not listen. There's no time  
For aught but giving you back where you belong ;  
And that's with you, Huff. Take her.

*Huff* Here is depth  
I cannot see to. Is it your last fling?—  
The dolt I am in these things!—What's this way  
You've found of living wickedly to the end?

*Shale*  
Scorn as you please, but take her back, man, take  
her.

*Huff*  
But she's my wife! Take her back now? What for?

*Mrs Huff*  
What for? Have you not known of thieves that  
throw  
Their robbery down, soon as they hear a step  
Sounding behind them on the road, and run  
A long way off, and pull an honest face?  
Ay, see Shale's eyes practising baby-looks!  
He never stole, not he!

*Shale* Don't hear her talk.

*Mrs Huff*  
But he was a talker once! Love was the thing;  
And love, he swore, would make the wrong go  
right,  
And Huff was a kind of devil—and that's true——



*Huff*

What? I've been devilish and never knew?

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Mrs Huff*

The devil in the world that hates all love.  
But Shale said, he'd the love in him would hold  
If the world's frame and the fate of men were  
crackt.

*Shale* What I said!

Whoever thought the world was going to crack?

*Mrs Huff*

And now he hears someone move behind him.—  
They'll say, perhaps, ' You stole this! '—Down it  
goes,  
Thrown to the dirty road—thrown to Huff!

*Shale*

Yes, to the owner.

*Mrs Huff*

It was not such brave thieving.

You did not take me from my owner, Shale:  
There's an old robber will do that some day,  
Not you.

*Vine*

Were you thinking of me then, missis?

*Mrs Huff (still to SHALE)*

You found me lost in the dirt: I was with Huff.  
You lifted me from there; and there again,  
Like a frightened urchin, you're for throwing me.

*Shale* Let it be that! I'm firm

Not to have you about me, when the thing,

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

Whatever it is, that's standing now behind  
The burning of the world, comes out on us.

*Huff*

The way men cheat! This windle-stalk was he  
Would hold a show of spirit for the world  
To study while it ruined!—Make what you please  
Of your short wrangle here, but leave me out.  
I have my thoughts—O far enough from this.  
[*Turning away.*]

*Shale (seizing him)*

You shall not put me off. I tell you, Huff,  
You are to take her back now.

*Huff*

Take her back!  
And what has she to do with what I want?

*Shale*

Isn't she yours? I must be quit of her;  
I'll not be in the risk of keeping her.  
She's yours!

*Huff*

And what's the good of her now to me?  
What's the good of a woman whom I've married?

*During this, WARP the molecatcher has come in.*

*Warp*

Shale and Huff at their old pother again!

*Merrick* The molecatcher!



Lascelles      *Sollers*  
Aber-      Why, but the fire that's eating the whole earth;  
crombie      The breath of it is scarlet in the sky!  
             You must have seen that?

*Warp*      But what's taken you?  
             You are like boys that go to hunt for ghosts,  
             And turn the scuttle of rats to a roused demon  
             Crawling to shut the door of the barn they search.  
             Fire? Yes, fire is playing a pretty game  
             Yonder, and has its golden fun to itself,  
             Seemingly.

*Sollers*      You don't know what 'tis that burns?

*Warp*  
             Call me a mole and not a molecatcher  
             If I do not. It is a rick that burns;  
             And a strange thing I'll count it if the rick  
             Be not old Huff's.

*Sollers*      That flare a fired stack?

*Huff*  
             Only one of my ricks alight? O Glory!  
             There may be chance for me yet.

*Merrick*      Best take the train  
             To Droitwich, Huff.

*Vine (at the door)*      It would be like a stack,  
             But for the star.

*Sollers (to WARP)*      Yes, as you're so clever,  
             You can talk down maybe yon brandishing star!

*Warp*

O, 'tis the star has flickt your brains? Indeed,  
The tail swings long enough to-night for that.  
Well, look your best at it; 'tis off again  
To go its rounds, they tell me, from now on;  
And the next time it swaggers in our sky,  
The moles a long while will have tired themselves  
Of having their easy joke with me.

[*A pause.*]

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Merrick*

You mean

The flight of the star is from us?

*Sollers*

But the world,

The whole world reckons on it battering us!

*Warp*

Who told you that?

*Sollers*

A dowser.

*Merrick*

Where's he gone?

*Warp*

A dowser! say a tramping conjurer.

You'll believe aught, if you believe a dowser.

*Sollers*

I had it in me to be doubting him.

*Merrick*

The noise you made was like that! But I knew  
You'd laugh at me, so sure you were the world  
Would shiver like a bursting grindlestone:  
Else I'd have said out loud, 'twas a fool's whimsy.

Lascelles     *Vine*  
Aber-     Where are you now? What am I now to think?  
crombie     Your minds run round in puzzles, like chased  
              hares.  
              I cannot sight them.

*Merrick*                     Think of going to bed.

*Sollers*     And dreaming prices for your pigs.

*Merrick*                                     O Warp,  
              You should have seen Vine crying! The moon, he  
              said,  
              The silver moon! Just like an onion 'twas  
              To stir the water in his eyes.

*Sollers*                                     He's left  
              A puddle of his tears where he was droopt  
              Over the table.

*Vine*                     There's to be no ruin?—  
              But what's the word of a molecatcher, to crow  
              So ringing over a dowser's word?

*Warp*                                     I'll tell you.  
              These dowsers live on lies: my trade's the truth.  
              I can read moles, and the way they've dug their  
              journeys,  
              Where you'd not see a wrinkle.

*Vine*                                     And he knows  
              The buried water.

*Warp*                                     There's always buried water,  
              If you prod deep enough. A dowser finds

Because the whole earth's floating, like a raft.  
What does he know? A twitching in his thews;  
A dog asleep knows that much. What I know  
I've learnt, and if I'd learnt it wrong, I'd starve.  
And if I'm right about the grubbing moles,  
Won't I be right for news of walking men?

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Merrick*

Of course you're right. Let's put the whole thing  
by,  
And have a pleasant drink.

*Shale (to Mrs HUFF)*            You must be tired  
With all this story. Shall we be off for home?

*Huff*

You brass! You don't go now with her! She's  
mine:  
You gave her up.

*Shale*                            And you made nothing of her.

*(To Mrs Huff)* Come on.

*Mrs Huff* Warp, will you do a thing for me?

*Warp* A hundred things.

*Mrs Huff*                    Then slap me these cur-dogs.

*Warp*

I will. Where will I slap them, and which first?

*Mrs Huff*

Maybe 'twill do if you but laugh at them.

Lascelles      *Warp*  
Aber-      I'll try for that; but they are not good jokes;  
crombie      Though there's a kind of monkey-look about them.

*Mrs Huff*  
They thinking I'd be near one or the other  
After this night! Will I be made no more  
Than clay that children puddle to their minds,  
Moulding it what they fancy?—Shale was brave:  
He made a boggy and defied it, till  
He frightened of his work and ran away.  
But Huff!—Huff was for modelling wickedly.

*Huff*      Who told you that?

*Mrs Huff*      I need no one's telling.  
I was your wife once. Don't I know your good-  
ness?  
A stupid heart gone sour with jealousy,  
To feel its blood too dull and thick for sinning.—  
Yes, Huff would figure a wicked thought, but had  
No notion how, and flung the clay aside.—  
O they were gaudy colours both! But now  
Fear has bleacht their swagger and left them  
blank,  
Fear of a loon that cried, End of the World!

*Huff*      Shale, do you know what we're to do?

*Shale*      I'd like  
To have the handling of that dowser-man.

*Huff*      Just that, my lad, just that!

*Warp*      And your fired rick?



*Huff*

Let it be blazes! Quick, Shale, after him!  
I'll tramp the night out, but I'll take the rogue.

Lascelles  
Aber-  
crombie

*Shale (to the others)*

You wait, and see us haul him by the ears,  
And swim the blatherer in Huff's farm-yard pond.

*[As HUFF and SHALE go out, they see the comet before them.]*

*Huff* The devil's own star is that!

*Shale*

As a pike basking.

And floats as calm

*Huff*

There shouldn't be such stars!

*Shale*

Neither such dowsers, and we'll learn him that.

*[They go off together.]*

*Sollers* Why, the star's dwindling now, surely!

*Merrick*

And dull now to the glowing size it was.

O, small

*Vine*

But is it certain there'll be nothing smasht?

Not even a house knockt roaring down in  
crumbles?

—And I did think, I'd open my wife's mouth  
With envy of the dreadful things I'd seen!

CURTAIN.



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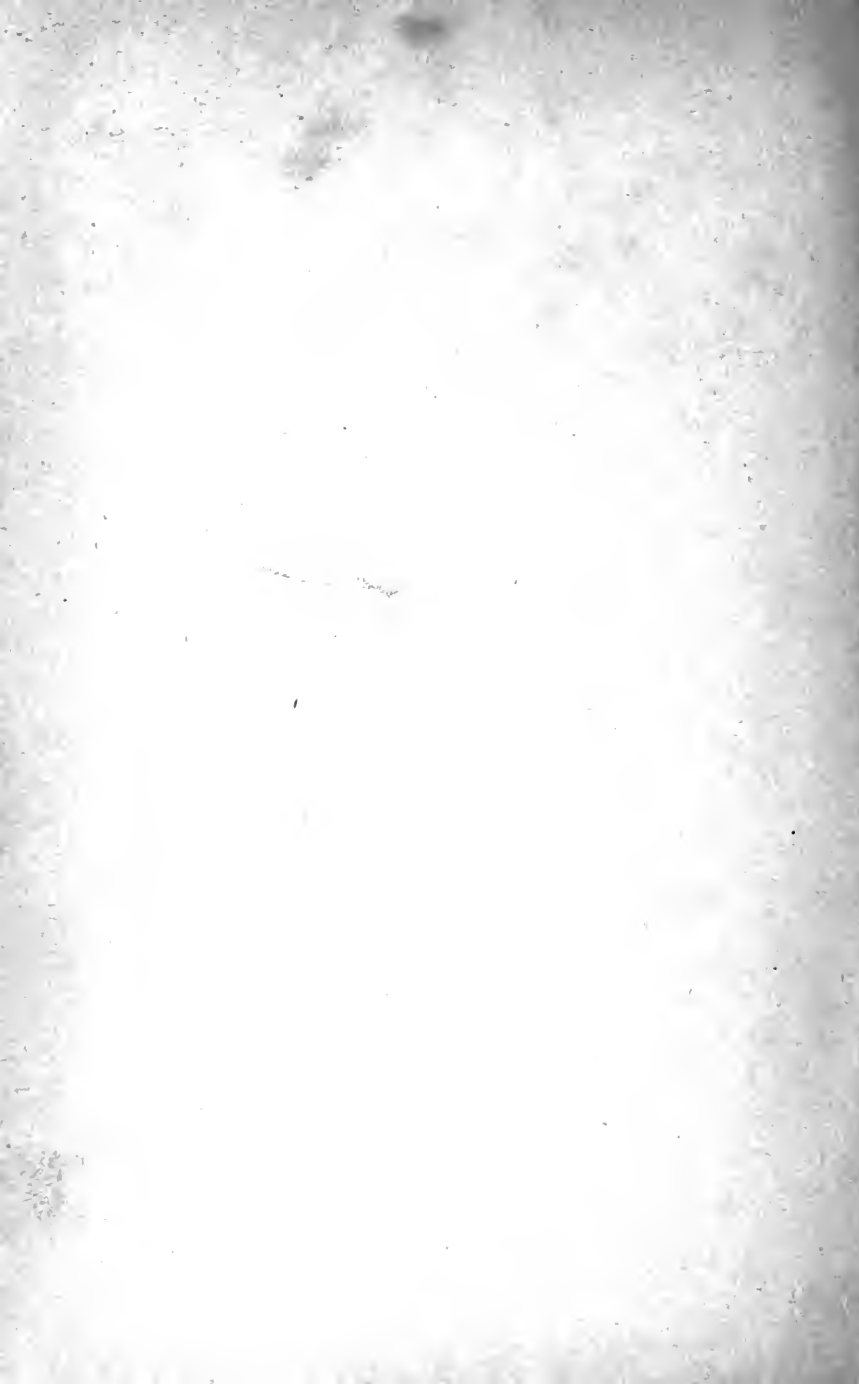
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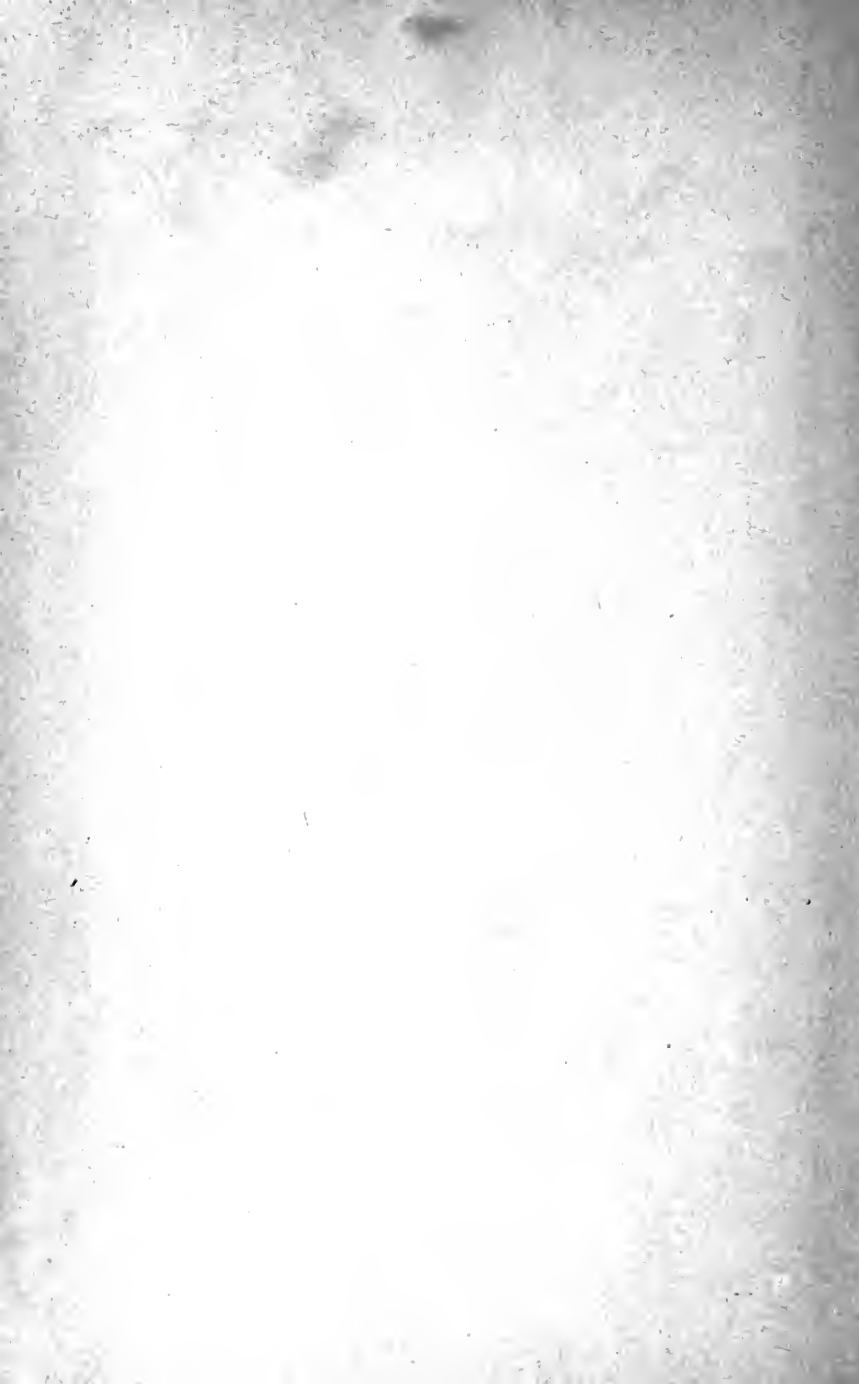
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